

# LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY 1884.

‘I SAY NO!’

*Or, the Love-Letter Answered.*

By WILKIE COLLINS.\*

BOOK THE SECOND.

*In London.*

## CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. ROOK.

EMILY's first day in the City library proved to be a day wasted.

Still persuaded that there was something in the newspapers, published under the date of the year 'seventy-seven, which Alban was afraid to let her see, she began reading the back-numbers at haphazard, without any definite idea of what she was looking for. Conscious of the error into which her own impatience had led her, she was at a loss how to retrace the false step that she had taken. But two alternatives presented themselves: either to abandon the hope of making any discovery—or to attempt to penetrate Alban's motives by means of pure guess-work, pursued in the dark.

How was the problem to be solved? This serious question troubled her all through the evening, and kept her awake when she went to bed. In despair of her capacity to remove the obstacle that stood in her way, she decided on resuming her regular

work at the Museum—turned her pillow to get at the cool side of it—and made up her mind to go to sleep.

In the case of the wiser animals, the Person submits to Sleep. It is only the superior human being who tries the hopeless experiment of making Sleep submit to the Person. Wakeful on the warm side of the pillow, Emily remained wakeful on the cool side—thinking again and again of the interview with Alban which had ended so strangely.

Little by little, her mind passed the limits which had restrained it thus far. Alban's conduct in keeping his secret, in the matter of the newspapers, now began to associate itself with Alban's conduct in keeping that other secret, which concealed from her his suspicions of Mrs. Rook.

She started up in her bed as the next possibility occurred to her.

In speaking of the disaster which had compelled Mr. and Mrs. Rook to close the inn, Cecilia had alluded to an inquest

\* *The Right of Translation is Reserved.*

held on the body of the murdered man. Emily had heard of such proceedings being reported in the newspapers. Had something appeared in the report of the inquest at Zeeland, which concerned Mrs. Rook? Had Alban discovered it? And, in that discovery, might the motive be found of which she was in search?

Led by the new light that had fallen on her, Emily returned to the library the next morning, with a definite idea of what she had to look for. Incapable of giving exact dates, Cecilia had informed her that the crime was committed 'in the autumn.' The month to choose, in beginning her examination, was therefore the month of August.

No discovery rewarded her. She tried September, next—with the same unsatisfactory result. On Monday the 1st of October, she met with some encouragement at last. At the top of a column appeared a telegraphic summary of all that was then known of the crime. In the number for the Wednesday following, she found a full report of the proceedings at the inquest.

Passing over the preliminary remarks, Emily read the evidence with the closest attention.

The jury having viewed the body, and having visited an out-house in which the murder had been committed, the first witness called was Mr. Benjamin Rook, landlord of the Hand-in-Hand inn.

On the evening of Saturday, September 29th, 1877, two gentlemen presented themselves at Mr. Rook's house, under circumstances which especially excited his attention.

The youngest of the two was short, and of fair complexion. He carried a knapsack, like a gen-

tleman on a pedestrian excursion; his manners were pleasant; and he was decidedly good-looking. His companion, older, taller, and darker—and a finer man altogether—leaned on his arm, and seemed to be exhausted. In every respect, they were singularly unlike each other. The younger stranger (excepting little half-whiskers) was clean shaved. The elder wore his whole beard. Not knowing their names, the landlord distinguished them, at the coroner's suggestion, as the fair gentleman, and the dark gentleman.

It was raining when the two arrived at the inn. There were signs in the heavens of a stormy night.

On accosting the landlord, the fair gentleman volunteered the following statement:

Approaching the village, he had been startled by seeing the dark gentleman (a total stranger to him) stretched prostrate on the grass at the roadside—so far as he could judge, in a swoon. Having a flask with brandy in it, he revived the fainting man, and led him to the inn.

This statement was confirmed by a labourer, who was on his way to the village at the time.

The dark gentleman endeavoured to explain what had happened to him. He had, as he supposed, allowed too long a time to pass (after an early breakfast that morning), without taking food: he could only attribute the fainting fit to that cause. He was not liable to fainting fits. What purpose (if any) had brought him into the neighbourhood of Zeeland, he did not state. He had no intention of remaining at the inn, except for refreshment; and he asked for a carriage to take him to the railway-station.

The fair gentleman, seeing the

signs of bad weather, desired to remain in Mr. Rook's house for the night, and proposed to resume his walking tour the next day.

Excepting the case of supper, which could be easily provided, the landlord had no choice but to disappoint both his guests. In his small way of business, none of his customers wanted to hire a carriage—even if he could have afforded to keep one. As for beds, the few rooms which the inn contained were all engaged; including even the room occupied by himself and his wife. An exhibition of agricultural implements had been opened in the neighbourhood, only two days since; and a public competition between rival machines was to be decided on the coming Monday. Not only was the Hand-in-Hand inn crowded, but even the accommodation, offered by the nearest town, had proved barely sufficient to meet the public demand.

The gentlemen looked at each other, and agreed that there was no help for it but to hurry the supper, and walk to the railway-station—a distance of between five and six miles—in time to catch the last train.

While the meal was being prepared, the rain held off for a while. The dark man asked his way to the post-office, and went out by himself.

He came back in about ten minutes, and sat down afterwards to supper with his companion. Neither the landlord, nor any other person in the public room, noticed any change in him on his return. He was a grave quiet sort of person, and (unlike the other one) not much of a talker.

As the darkness came on, the rain fell again heavily; and the heavens were black.

A flash of lightning startled the gentlemen when they went to the

window to look out: the thunder-storm began. It was simply impossible that two strangers to the neighbourhood could find their way to the station, through storm and darkness, in time to catch the train. With or without bedrooms, they must remain at the inn for the night.

Having already given up their own room to their lodgers, the landlord and landlady had no other place to sleep in than the kitchen. Next to the kitchen, and communicating with it by a door, was an outhouse; used, partly as a scullery, partly as a lumber-room. There was an old truckle-bed among the lumber, on which one of the gentlemen might rest. A mattress on the floor could be provided for the other. After adding a table and a basin, for the purposes of the toilet, the accommodation which Mr. Rook was able to offer, came to an end.

The travellers agreed to occupy this make-shift bedchamber.

It was then between nine and ten o'clock. The thunderstorm had passed away; but the rain continued to fall heavily. Soon after eleven the guests at the inn retired for the night. There was some little discussion between the two travellers, as to which of them should take possession of the truckle-bed. It was put an end to by the fair gentleman, in his own pleasant way. He proposed to 'toss up for it'—and he lost. The dark gentleman went into the room first; the other following him after waiting a while.

Having previously barred the second door of the outhouse which led into the yard, Mr. Rook fastened the other door, the lock and bolts of which were on the side of the kitchen. He then secured the house door, and the shutters over the lower windows. Returning to the kitchen, he noticed that

the time was ten minutes short of midnight. Soon afterwards, he and his wife went to bed.

Nothing happened to disturb Mr. Rook during the night.

At a quarter to seven the next morning, he got up; his wife being still asleep. He had been instructed to wake the gentlemen early; and he knocked at their door. Receiving no answer, after repeatedly knocking, he opened the door and stepped into the outhouse.

At this point in his evidence, the witness's recollections appeared to overpower him. 'Give me a moment, gentlemen,' he said to the jury. 'I have had a dreadful fright; and I don't believe I shall get over it for the rest of my life.'

The coroner helped him by a question: 'What did you see when you opened the door?'

Mr. Rook answered: 'I saw the dark man stretched out on his bed—dead, with a frightful wound in his throat. I saw an open razor, stained with smears of blood, at his side.'

'Did you notice the door, leading into the yard?'

'It was wide open, sir. When I was able to look round me, the other traveller—I mean the man with the fair complexion, who carried the knapsack—was nowhere to be seen.'

'What did you do, after making these discoveries?'

'I closed the yard door. Then, I locked the other door, and put the key in my pocket. After that I roused the servant, and sent him to the constable—who lived near to us—while I ran for the doctor, whose house was at the other end of our village. The doctor sent his groom, on horseback, to the police-office in the town. When I returned to the inn, the constable was there—

and he and the police took the matter into their own hands.'

'You have nothing more to tell us?'

'Nothing more.'

## CHAPTER XXV.

'J. B.'

Mr. Rook having completed his evidence, the police authorities were the next witnesses examined.

They had not found the slightest trace of any attempt to break into the house in the night. The murdered man's gold watch and chain were discovered under his pillow. On examining his clothes the money was found in his purse, and the gold studs and sleeve-buttons were left in his shirt. But his pocket-book (seen by witnesses who had not yet been examined) was missing. The search for visiting-cards and letters had proved to be fruitless. Only the initials 'J. B.' were marked on his linen. He had brought no luggage with him to the inn. Nothing could be found which led to the discovery of his name or of the purpose which had taken him into that part of the country.

The police examined the outhouse next. The result of this proceeding was to strengthen the circumstantial evidence against the missing man.

He must have carried away his knapsack, when he took to flight; but he had been (probably) in too great a hurry to look for his razor-case. It had fallen between the table and the wall. Of the two compartments which it contained, one had a razor in it, and one was empty. The blood-stained razor exactly fitted the second compartment; and the name of the Belgian city, 'Liège,' was engraved on both razors alike. After hear-



ing the description of the suspected person, given by the landlord, the landlady, and the servant, and after seeing the beard and moustache of many years' growth on the face of the corpse, it was impossible to doubt that the razors belonged to the person who had appeared at the inn with a knapsack on his back.

The yard was the next place inspected. Footsteps were found on the muddy earth, up to the wall. But the road on the other side had been recently mended with stones, and the trace of the fugitive was lost. Casts had been taken of the footsteps; and no other means of discovery had been left untried. The authorities in London had also been communicated with by telegraph.

The doctor being called, described a personal peculiarity, which he had noticed at the post-mortem examination, and which might lead to the identification of the murdered man.

As to the cause of death, the witness said it could be stated in two words. The internal jugular vein had been cut through, with such violence, judging by the appearances, that the wound could not have been inflicted, in the act of suicide, by the hand of the deceased person. No other injuries, and no sign of disease, were found on the body. The one cause of death had been Hemorrhage; and the one peculiarity which called for notice had been discovered in the mouth. Two of the front teeth, in the upper jaw, were false. They had been so admirably made to resemble the natural teeth on either side of them, in form and colour, that the witness had only hit on the discovery by accidentally touching the inner side of the gum with one of his fingers.

The landlady was examined,

when the doctor had retired. Mrs. Rook was able, in answering questions put to her, to give important information, in reference to the missing pocket-book.

Before retiring to rest, the two gentlemen had paid the bill—intending to leave the inn the first thing in the morning. The traveller with the knapsack paid his share in money. The other unfortunate gentleman looked into his purse, and found only a shilling and a sixpence in it. He asked Mrs. Rook if she could change a bank-note. She told him it could be done, provided the note was for no considerable sum of money. Upon that he opened his pocket-book (which the witness described minutely), and turned out the contents on the table. After searching among many Bank of England notes, some in one pocket of the book and some in another, he found a note of the value of five pounds. He thereupon settled his bill, and received the change from Mrs. Rook—her husband being in another part of the room, attending to the guests. She noticed a letter in an envelope, and a paper with writing on it, and a few cards, which looked like visiting-cards, among the bank-notes which he had turned out on the table. When she returned to him with the change, he had just put them back, and was closing the pocket-book. She saw him place it in one of the breast-pockets of his coat.

The fellow traveller who had accompanied him to the inn was present all the time, sitting on the opposite side of the table. He made a remark when he saw the notes produced. He said, 'Put all that money back—don't tempt a poor man like me!' It was said laughing, as if by way of a joke.

Mrs. Rook had observed nothing

more that night; had slept as soundly as usual; and had been awakened when her husband knocked at the outhouse-door, according to instructions received from the gentlemen, overnight.

Three of the guests in the public room corroborated Mrs. Rook's evidence. They were respectable persons, well and widely known in that part of Hampshire. Besides these, there were two strangers staying in the house. They referred the coroner to their employers—eminent manufacturers at Sheffield and Wolverhampton—whose testimony spoke for itself.

The last witness called was a grocer in the village, who kept the post-office.

On the evening of the 29th, a dark gentleman, wearing his beard, came into the shop, and asked for a letter addressed to 'J. B., Post-office, Zeeland.' The letter had arrived by that morning's post; and it was at once handed to the applicant. He stepped a little nearer to the light of the lamp at the inner end of the counter, and opened his letter and read it. It must have been short, for the reading was done in a moment. He seemed to think over it for awhile; and then he turned round towards the shop-door to go out. There was nothing to notice in his look or in his manner. The witness offered a remark on the weather; and the gentleman said, 'Yes, it looks like a bad night'—and so went out.

The post-master's evidence was of importance in one respect: it suggested the motive which had brought the deceased to Zeeland. The letter addressed to 'J. B.' was, in all probability, the letter seen by Mrs. Rook among the contents of the pocket-book, spread out on the table.

The inquiry being, so far, at an

end, the inquest was adjourned—on the chance of obtaining additional evidence, when the reported proceedings were read by the public.

Consulting the next day's number of the newspaper, Emily discovered that the deceased person had been identified by a witness from London.

Henry Forth, gentleman's valet, being examined, made the following statement:—

He had read the medical evidence contained in the report of the inquest; and, believing that he could identify the deceased, had been sent by his present master to assist the object of the inquiry. Ten days since, being then out of place, he had answered an advertisement. The next day he was instructed to call at Tracey's Hotel, London, at six o'clock in the evening, and to ask for Mr. James Brown. Arriving at the hotel, he saw the gentleman for a few minutes only. Mr. Brown had a friend with him. After glancing over the valet's references, he said, 'I haven't time enough to speak to you this evening. Call here to-morrow morning at nine o'clock.' The gentleman who was present laughed, and said, 'You won't be up!' Mr. Brown answered, 'That won't matter; the man can come to my bedroom, and let me see how he understands his duties, on trial.' At nine the next morning, Mr. Brown was reported to be still in bed; and the witness was informed of the number of the room. He knocked at the door. A drowsy voice inside said something, which he interpreted as meaning 'Come in.' He went in. The toilet-table was on his left hand, and the bed (with the lower curtain drawn) was on his right. He saw on the table a tumbler with a little water in it, and with

two false teeth in the water. Mr. Brown started up in the bed—looked at him furiously—abused him for daring to enter the room—and shouted to him to ‘get out.’ The witness, not accustomed to be treated in that way, felt naturally indignant, and at once withdrew—but not before he had plainly seen the vacant place which the false teeth had been made to fill. Perhaps Mr. Brown had forgotten that he had left his teeth on the table. Or perhaps he (the valet) had misunderstood what had been said to him when he knocked at the door. Either way, it seemed to be plain enough that the gentleman resented the discovery of his false teeth by a stranger.

Having concluded his statement, the witness proceeded to identify the remains of the deceased.

He at once recognised the gentleman, named James Brown, whom he had twice seen—once in the evening, and again the next morning—at Tracey’s Hotel. In answer to further inquiries, he declared that he knew nothing of the family, or of the place of residence of the deceased. He complained to the proprietor of the hotel of the rude treatment that he had received, and asked if Mr. Tracey knew anything of Mr. James Brown. Mr. Tracey knew nothing of him. On consulting the hotel book it was found that he had given notice to leave, that afternoon.

Before returning to London, the witness produced references which gave him an excellent character. He also left the address of the master who had engaged him three days since.

The last precaution adopted was to have the face of the corpse photographed, before the coffin was closed.

On the same day the jury agreed on their verdict: ‘Wilful Murder

against some person or persons unknown.’

Two days later, Emily found a last allusion to the crime—extracted from the columns of the ‘South Hampshire Gazette.’

A relative of the deceased, seeing the report of the adjourned inquest, had appeared (accompanied by a medical gentleman); had seen the photograph; and had declared the identification by Henry Forth to be correct.

Among other particulars, now communicated for the first time, it was stated that the late Mr. James Brown had been unreasonably sensitive on the subject of his false teeth, and that the one member of his family who knew of his wearing them was the relative who now claimed his remains.

The claim having been established to the satisfaction of the authorities, the corpse was removed by railroad the same day. No further light had been thrown on the murder. The handbill offering the reward, and describing the suspected man, had failed to prove of any assistance to the investigations of the police.

From that date, no further notice of the crime committed at the Hand-in-Hand inn appeared in the public journals.

Emily closed the volume which she had been consulting, and thankfully acknowledged the services of the librarian.

The new reader had excited this gentleman’s interest. Noticing how carefully she examined the numbers of the old newspaper, he looked at her, from time to time, wondering whether it was good news or bad of which she was in search. She read steadily and continuously; but she never rewarded his curiosity by any outward sign of the im-

pression that had been produced on her. When she left the room there was nothing to remark in her manner; she looked quietly thoughtful—and that was all.

The librarian smiled—amused by his own folly. Because a stranger's appearance had attracted him, he had taken it for granted that circumstances of romantic interest must be connected with her visit to the library. Far from misleading him, as he supposed, his fancy might have been employed to better purpose, if it had taken a higher flight—and had associated Emily with the fateful gloom of tragedy, in place of the brighter interest of romance.

There, among the ordinary readers of the day, was a dutiful and affectionate daughter following the dreadful story of the death of her father by murder, and believing it to be the story of a stranger—because she loved and trusted the person whose short-sighted mercy had deceived her. That very discovery, the dread of which had shaken the good doctor's firm nerves, had forced Alban to exclude from his confidence the woman whom he loved, and had driven the faithful old servant from the bedside of her dying mistress—that very discovery Emily had now made, with a face which never changed colour, and a heart which beat at ease. Was the deception that had won this cruel victory over truth destined still to triumph, in the days which were to come? Yes—if the life of earth is a foretaste of the life of hell. No—if a lie *is* a lie, be the merciful motive for the falsehood what it may. No—if all deceit contains in it the seed of retribution, to be ripened inexorably in the lapse of time.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### MOTHER EVE.

THE servant received Emily, on her return to the cottage, with a sly smile. 'Here he is again, Miss; waiting to see you.'

She opened the parlour door, and revealed Alban Morris, as restless as ever, walking up and down the room.

'When I missed you at the Museum, I was afraid you might be ill,' he said. 'Ought I to have gone away, when my anxiety was relieved? Shall I go away now?'

'You must take a chair, Mr. Morris, and hear what I have to say for myself. When you left me after your last visit, I suppose I felt the force of example. At any rate I, like you, had my suspicions. I have been trying to confirm them—and I have failed.'

He paused, with the chair in his hand. 'Suspicions of Me?' he asked.

'Certainly! Can you guess how I have been employed for the last two days? No—not even your ingenuity can do that. I have been hard at work, in another reading-room, consulting the same back numbers of the same newspaper, which you have been examining at the British Museum. There is my confession—and now we will have some tea.'

She moved to the fireplace, to ring the bell, and failed to see the effect produced on Alban by those lightly-uttered words. The common phrase is the only phrase that can describe it. He was thunderstruck.

'Yes,' she resumed, 'I have read the report of the inquest. If I know nothing else, I know that the murder at the inn can't be the discovery which you are bent on keeping from me. Don't be alarmed for the preservation of

your secret! I am too much discouraged to try again.'

The servant interrupted them by answering the bell: Alban once more escaped detection. Emily gave her orders with an approach to the old gaiety of her school days. 'Tea, as soon as possible—and let us have the new cake. Are you too much of a man, Mr. Morris, to like cake?'

In his state of agitation, he was unreasonably irritated by that playful question. 'There is one thing I like better than cake,' he said; 'and that one thing is a plain explanation.'

His tone puzzled her. 'Have I said anything to offend you?' she asked. 'Surely you can make allowance for a girl's curiosity? O, you shall have your explanation—and, what is more, you shall have it without reserve!'

She was as good as her word. What she had thought, and what she had planned, when he left her after his last visit, was frankly and fully told. 'If you wonder how I discovered the library,' she went on, 'I must refer you to my aunt's lawyer. He lives in the City—and I wrote to him to help me. I don't consider that my time has been wasted. Mr. Morris, we owe an apology to Mrs. Rook.'

Alban's astonishment, when he heard this, forced its way to expression in words. 'What can you possibly mean?' he asked.

The tea was brought in before Emily could reply. She filled the cups, and sighed as she looked at the cake. 'If Cecilia was here, how she would enjoy it!' With that complimentary tribute to her friend, she handed a slice to Alban. He never even noticed it.

'We have both of us behaved most unkindly to Mrs. Rook,' she resumed. 'I can excuse your not seeing it; for I should not have seen it either, but for the news-

paper. While I was reading, I had an opportunity of thinking over what we said and did, when the poor woman's behaviour so needlessly offended us. I was too excited to think, at the time—and, besides, I had been upset, only the night before, by what Miss Jethro said to me.'

Alban started. 'What has Miss Jethro to do with it?' he asked.

'Nothing at all,' Emily answered. 'She spoke to me of her own private affairs. A long story—and you wouldn't be interested in it. Let me finish what I had to say. Mrs. Rook was naturally reminded of the murder, when she heard that my name was Brown; and she must certainly have been struck—as I was—by the coincidence of my father's death taking place at the same time when his unfortunate namesake was killed. Doesn't this sufficiently account for her agitation when she looked at the locket? We first took her by surprise; and then we suspected her of Heaven knows what, because the poor creature didn't happen to have her wits about her, and to remember at the right moment what a very common name "Brown" is. Don't you see it as I do?'

'I see that you have arrived at a remarkable change of opinion, since we spoke of the subject in the garden at school.'

'In my place, you would have changed your opinion too. I shall write to Mrs. Rook by to-morrow's post.'

Alban heard her with dismay. 'Pray be guided by my advice!' he said, earnestly. 'Pray don't write that letter!'

'Why not?'

'It was too late to recall the words which he had rashly allowed to escape him. How could he reply?'

To own that he had not only



read what Emily had read, but had carefully copied the whole narrative and considered it at his leisure, was simply impossible after what he had now heard. Her innocent defence of Sir Jervis's housekeeper (ignoring former conclusions at which she had herself arrived) had actually relieved him of the last doubt left in his mind. Reading of the removal of the remains of the murdered man by a 'relative,' he had asked himself why that 'relative' had not been named. And he had concluded that some private and pressing reason for concealment had been urged, which the coroner and reporters received with sympathy and submission. He was now able to trace back the concealment to the 'relative' whose name had been suppressed, and whose object had evidently been to prevent Emily from discovering the terrible circumstances under which her father had met with his death. Her peace of mind depended absolutely on Alban's discretion. Silence was a mercy, and silence was a lie; and he—a stranger—had no choice left but to feel the family compassion, and to become an accomplice in the family fraud.

In the mean time, Emily reminded him that he had not yet answered her.

'Isn't the imprudence of writing to such a person plain enough to speak for itself?' he suggested cautiously.

'Not to me.'

She made that reply rather obstinately. Alban seemed (in her view) to be trying to prevent her from atoning for an act of injustice. Besides, he despised her cake. 'I want to know why you object,' she said; taking back the neglected slice, and eating it herself.

'I object,' Alban answered, 'be-

cause Mrs. Rook is a coarse presuming woman. She may pervert your letter to some use of her own, which you may have reason to regret.'

'Is that all?'

'Isn't it enough?'

'It may be enough for you. When I have done a person an injury, and wish to make an apology, I don't think it necessary to inquire whether the person's manners happen to be vulgar or not.'

Alban's patience was still equal to any demands that she could make on it. 'I can only offer you advice which is honestly intended for your own good,' he gently replied.

'You would have more influence over me, Mr. Morris, if you were a little readier to take me into your confidence. I daresay I am wrong—but I don't like following advice which is given to me in the dark.'

It was impossible to offend him. 'Very naturally,' he said; 'I don't blame you.'

Her colour deepened and her voice rose. Alban's patient adherence to his own view—so courteously and considerately urged—was beginning to try her temper. 'In plain words,' she rejoined, 'I am to believe that you can't be mistaken in your judgment of another person.'

There was a ring at the door of the cottage while she was speaking. But she was too warmly interested in confuting Alban to notice it.

He was quite willing to be confuted. Even when she lost her temper, she was still interesting to him. 'I don't expect you to think me infallible,' he said. 'Perhaps you will remember that I have had some experience. I am unfortunately older than you are.'

'O, if wisdom comes with age,' she smartly reminded him, 'your



friend Miss Redwood is old enough to be your mother—and she suspected Mrs. Rook of murder, because the poor woman looked at a door, and disliked being in the next room to a sidgety old maid.’

Alban’s manner changed: he shrank from that chance allusion to doubts and fears which he dare not acknowledge. ‘Let us talk of something else,’ he said.

She looked at him with a saucy smile. ‘Have I driven you into a corner at last? And is *that* your way of getting out of it?’

Even his endurance failed. ‘Are you trying to provoke me?’ he asked. ‘Are you no better than other women? I wouldn’t have believed it of you, Emily?’

‘Emily!’ she repeated the name in a tone of surprise, which reminded him that he had addressed her with familiarity at a most inappropriate time—the time when they were on the point of a quarrel. He felt the implied reproach too keenly to be able to answer her with composure.

‘I think of Emily—I love Emily—my one hope is that Emily may love me. O my dear, is there no excuse if I forget to call you “Miss” when you distress me?’

All that was tender and true in her nature secretly took his part. She would have followed that better impulse, if he had only been calm enough to understand her momentary silence, and to give her time. But the temper of a gentle and generous man, once roused, is slow to subside. Alban abruptly left his chair. ‘I had better go!’ he said.

‘As you please,’ she answered. ‘Whether you go, Mr. Morris, or whether you stay, I shall write to Mrs. Rook.’

The ring at the bell was followed by the appearance of a visitor. Doctor Allday opened the door, just in time to hear Emily’s

last words. Her vehemence seemed to amuse him.

‘Who is Mrs. Rook?’ he asked.

‘A most respectable person,’ Emily answered indignantly; ‘housekeeper to Sir Jervis Redwood. You needn’t sneer at her, Doctor Allday! She has not always been in service—she was landlady of the inn at Zeeland.’

The doctor, about to put his hat on a chair, paused. The inn at Zeeland reminded him of the handbill, and of the visit of Miss Jethro.

‘Why are you so hot over it?’ he inquired.

‘Because I detest prejudice!’ With this assertion of liberal feeling she pointed to Alban, standing quietly apart at the further end of the room. ‘There is the most prejudiced man living—he hates Mrs. Rook. Would you like to be introduced to him? You’re a philosopher; you may do him some good. Doctor Allday—Mr. Alban Morris.’

The doctor recognised the man, with the felt hat and the objectionable beard, whose personal appearance had not impressed him favourably.

Although they may hesitate to acknowledge it, there are respectable Englishmen still left, who regard a felt hat and a beard as symbols of republican disaffection to the altar and the throne. Doctor Allday’s manner might have expressed this curious form of patriotic feeling, but for the associations which Emily had revived. In his present frame of mind, he was outwardly courteous, because he was inwardly suspicious. Mrs. Rook had been described to him as formerly landlady of the inn at Zeeland. Were there reasons for Mr. Morris’s hostile feeling towards this woman, which might be referable to the crime committed in her house, and which might

threaten Emily's tranquillity, if they were made known? It would not be amiss to see a little more of Mr. Morris, on the first convenient occasion.

'I am glad to make your acquaintance, sir.'

'You are very kind, Doctor Allday.'

The exchange of polite conventionalities having been accomplished, Alban approached Emily to take his leave, with mingled feelings of regret and anxiety—regret for having allowed himself to speak harshly; anxiety to part with her in kindness.

'Will you forgive me for differing from you?' It was all he could venture to say, in the presence of a stranger.

'O, yes!' she said, quietly.

'Will you think again before you decide?'

'Certainly, Mr. Morris. But it won't alter my opinion, if I do.'

The doctor, hearing what passed between them, frowned. On what subject had they been differing? And what opinion did Emily decline to alter?

Alban gave it up. He took her hand gently. 'Shall I see you at the Museum to-morrow?' he asked.

She was politely indifferent to the last. 'Yes—unless something happens to keep me at home.'

The doctor's eyebrows still expressed disapproval. For what object was the meeting proposed? And why at a museum?

'Good-afternoon, Doctor Allday.'

'Good-afternoon, sir.'

For a moment after Alban's departure, the doctor stood irresolute. Arriving suddenly at a decision, he snatched up his hat, and turned to Emily in a hurry.

'I bring you news, my dear, which will surprise you. Who do you think has just left my house? Mrs. Ellmother! Don't

interrupt me. She has made up her mind to go out to service again. Tired of leading an idle life—that's her own account of it—and asks me to act as her reference.'

'Did you consent?'

'Consent! If I act as her reference, I shall be asked how she came to leave her last place. A nice dilemma! Either I must own that she deserted her mistress on her deathbed—or tell a lie. When I put it to her in that way, she walked out of the house in dead silence. If she applies to you next, receive her as I did—or decline to see her, which would be better still.'

'Why am I to decline to see her?'

'In consequence of her behaviour to your aunt, to be sure! No: I have said all I wanted to say—and I have no time to spare for answering idle questions. Good-bye.'

Socially speaking, doctors try the patience of their nearest and dearest friends, in this respect—they are almost always in a hurry. Doctor Allday's precipitate departure did not tend to soothe Emily's irritated nerves. She began to find excuses for Mrs. Ellmother in a spirit of pure contradiction. The old servant's behaviour might admit of justification: a friendly welcome might persuade her to explain herself. 'If she applies to me,' Emily determined, 'I shall certainly receive her.'

Having arrived at this resolution, her mind reverted to Alban.

Some of the sharp things she had said to him, subjected to after-reflection in solitude, failed to justify themselves. Her better sense began to reproach her. She tried to silence that unwelcome monitor by laying the blame on Alban. Why had he been so patient and so good? What harm

was there in his calling her 'Emily'? If he had told her to call *him* by his Christian name, she might have done it. How noble he looked, when he got up to go away; he was actually handsome! Women may say what they please and write what they please: their natural instinct is to find their master in a man—especially when they like him. Sinking lower and lower in her own estimation, Emily tried to turn the current of her thoughts in another direction. She took up a book—opened it, looked into it, threw it across the room.

If Alban had returned at that moment, resolved on a reconciliation—if he had said, 'My dear, I want to see you like yourself again; will you give me a kiss, and make it up?'—would he have left her crying when he went away? She was crying now.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### MENTOR AND TELEMACHUS.

IF Emily's eyes could have followed Alban as her thoughts were following him, she would have seen him stop before he reached the end of the road in which the cottage stood. His heart was full of tenderness and sorrow: the longing to return to her was more than he could resist. It would be easy to wait, within view of the gate, until the doctor's visit came to an end. He had just decided to go back and keep watch—when he heard rapid footsteps approaching. There (devil take him!) was the doctor himself.

'I have something to say to you, Mr. Morris. Which way are you walking?'

'Any way,' Alban answered—not very graciously.

'Then let us take the turning that leads to my house. It's not customary for strangers, especially when they happen to be Englishmen, to place confidence in each other. Let me set the example of violating that rule. I want to speak to you about Miss Emily. May I take your arm? Thank you. At my age, girls in general—unless they are my patients—are not objects of interest to me. But that girl at the cottage—I daresay I am in my dotage—I tell you, sir, she has bewitched me! Upon my soul, I could hardly be more anxious about her, if I was her father. And, mind, I am not an affectionate man by nature. Are you anxious about her too?'

'Yes.'

'In what way?'

'In what way are you anxious, Doctor Allday?'

The doctor smiled grimly.

'You don't trust me? Well, I have promised to set the example. Keep your mask on, sir—mine is off, come what may of it. But, observe: if you repeat what I am going to say—'

Alban would hear no more. 'Whatever you may say, Doctor Allday, is trusted to my honour. If you doubt my honour, be so good as to let go of my arm—I am not walking your way.'

The doctor's hand tightened its grasp. 'That little flourish of temper, my dear sir, is all I want to set me at my ease. I feel I have got hold of the right man. Now answer me this. Have you ever heard of a person named Miss Jethro?'

Alban suddenly came to a standstill.

'All right!' said the doctor. 'I couldn't have wished for a more satisfactory reply.'

'Wait a minute,' Alban interposed. 'I know Miss Jethro as a teacher at Miss Ladd's school,

who left her situation suddenly—and I know no more.'

The doctor's peculiar smile made its appearance again.

'Speaking in the vulgar tongue,' he said, 'you seem to be in a hurry to wash your hands of Miss Jethro.'

'I have no reason to feel any interest in her,' Alban replied.

'Don't be too sure of that, my friend. I have something to tell you which may alter your opinion. That ex-teacher at the school, sir, knows how the late Mr. Brown met his death, and how his daughter has been deceived about it. Ha, Mr. Morris, your face answers for you! You are as anxious about Emily as I am: we have the same object in view—and we must take care not to get in each other's way. Here is my house. Let us go in, and make a clean breast of it on both sides.'

Established in the safe seclusion of his study, the doctor still set the example of speaking without reserve. In clear and rapid narrative, he placed the whole of his experience of Miss Jethro and of Emily before his guest. Alban was not a man to leave this generous proof of confidence in him without an adequate return. The two thoroughly understood one another, before they had been an hour together.

Doctor Allday summed up the result.

'We only differ in opinion on one point,' he said. 'We both think it likely (from our experience of the women) that the suspected murderer had an accomplice. I say the guilty person is Miss Jethro. You say—Mrs. Rook.'

'When you have read my copy of the report,' Alban answered, 'I think you will arrive at my conclusion. Mrs. Rook might have entered the outhouse in which

the two men slept, at any time during the night, while her husband was asleep. The jury believed her when she declared that she never woke till the morning. I don't.'

'I am open to conviction, Mr. Morris. Now about the future. Do you mean to go on with your inquiries?'

'Even if I had no other motive than mere curiosity,' Alban answered, 'I think I should go on. But I have a more urgent purpose in view. All that I have done thus far, has been done in Emily's interests. My object, from the first, has been to preserve her from any association—in the past or in the future—with the woman whom I believe to have been concerned in her father's death. As I have already told you, she is innocently doing all she can, poor thing, to put obstacles in my way.'

'Yes, yes,' said the doctor; 'she means to write to Mrs. Rook—and you have nearly quarrelled about it. Trust me to take that matter in hand. I don't regard it as serious. But I am mortally afraid of what you are doing in Emily's interests. I wish you would give it up.'

'Why?'

'Because I see a danger. Thanks to Emily's implicit trust in her aunt (which we neither of us rated at its true importance), she is as innocent of suspicion as ever. But the chances, next time, may be against us. How do you know to what length your curiosity may lead you? Or on what shocking discoveries you may not blunder, with the best intentions? Some unforeseen accident may open her eyes to the truth, before you can prevent it. I seem to surprise you?'

'You do, indeed, surprise me.'

'In the old story, my dear sir,

Mentor sometimes surprised Telemachus. I am Mentor—without being, I hope, quite so long-winded as that respectable philosopher. Let me put it in two words. Emily's happiness is precious to you. Take care you are not made the means of wrecking it! Will you consent to a sacrifice, for her sake?

'I will do anything for her sake.'

'Will you give up your inquiries?'

'From this moment I have done with them.'

'Mr. Morris, you are the best friend she has.'

'The next best friend to you, doctor.'

In that fond persuasion they parted—too eagerly devoted to Emily's welfare to look at the prospect before them in its least hopeful aspect. Both clever men, neither one nor the other asked himself if any human resistance has ever yet obstructed the progress of truth—when truth has once begun to force its way to the light.

For the second time Alban stopped, on his way home. The longing to be reconciled with Emily was not to be resisted. He

returned to the cottage, only to find disappointment waiting for him. The servant reported that her young mistress had gone to bed with a bad headache.

Alban waited a day, in the hope that Emily might write to him. No letter arrived. He repeated his visit the next morning. Fortune was still against him. On this occasion, Emily was engaged.

'Engaged with a visitor?' he asked.

'Yes, sir. A young lady named Miss de Sor.'

Where had he heard that name before? He remembered immediately that he had heard it at the school. Miss de Sor was the unattractive new pupil, whom the girls called Francine. Alban looked at the parlour window as he left the cottage. It was of serious importance that he should set himself right with Emily. 'And mere gossip,' he thought contemptuously, 'stands in my way!'

If he had been less absorbed in his own interests, he might have remembered that mere gossip is not always to be despised. It has worked fatal mischief in its time.

(*To be continued.*)

## DAWN AND DEATH.

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With cheeks like April roses,  
And locks of golden light,  
The baby-dawn reposes  
Upon the breast of night.  
    With kisses and caresses  
    Her daughter's form she blesses,  
    And combs her silken tresses,  
Till each dark lid discloses  
    A beauty blue and bright.

Maiden-like, the morning,  
    A garland in her hair,  
And gems her throat adorning,  
    With music floods the air.  
    The sunbeam, heaven's rafter,  
    Is shaken by her laughter,  
    While unseen powers waft her,  
And sing the dulcet warning,  
    'She must not linger there !'

Deep grief her beauty veiling,  
    Night, in her silent bower,  
Droops mournfully bewailing  
    Her child, the twilight hour.  
    While on her bosom lying  
    She heard her faintly sighing,  
    She watched her slowly dying,  
Till breath and colour failing,  
    She faded like a flower.

Alas for life ! Its dawning  
    Alone is full of joy,  
Though hopeful is the morning  
    To every maid and boy.  
    For half our gleams of gladness  
    Are but the mirth of madness—  
    A mask to cover sadness—  
That Death, with scarce a warning,  
    Shall soon or late destroy.

CECIL MAXWELL-LYTE.



## THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

Past and Present compared.

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DR. JOHNSON said, 'A traveller cannot at the same time drink of the mouth and of the source of the Nile;' and the nearer you approach the one the further you recede from the other. This is true of the 'good old times' as compared with modern times. We are not about to deny our advantages, but simply to argue they are not unqualified. Former days had their own set of advantages too; and with all we have gained there is much we have left behind. Nor is it a slight consideration that our surroundings may alter, but not ourselves. Our pleasures may vary, but not increase. As a boy, we relished ginger-pop as much as when older we enjoyed champagne. The question is one of comparison—how much on the balance we are the better or the happier, and how much life runs smoother and more pleasantly on the whole, for all the inventions and facilities of these last fifty years. There is a certain hallucination and excitement, and a certain harmony of feeling and equanimity, on which our happiness depends. Granted the result, it little matters how insignificant the means. *Quid refert dum felix sis?* 'What's the odds while you're happy?' says the schoolboy. 'If a man is tickled with a straw, he only wants a straw given him to be tickled with.' In other words, the means and elements of happiness are very simple: by multiplying your means you do not necessarily affect the result, for

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that depends less on the dainties than on the appetite, less in what the world calls pleasure than on a healthy moral nature to extract pleasure from them.

Still, we can imagine some one objecting, 'See that picture of the old stage-coach. Ten miles an hour was deemed fast travelling. How often have we sat twelve hours between London and Bath—one of four on a seat like a knifeboard, amidst summer's heat or winter's frost and rain and snow, and the cost more than double of the express train!'

Our reply is, Very true; but then we seldom travelled; we sought and found our resources nearer home. We had one expense the less: for railway fares have become a necessary of life, one more family expense, and one more hardship added to our lot is not to afford them. We have one more desire to gratify. Without being too philosophical, we may be allowed to ask if it were not better to be without the extra desire. Ask any paterfamilias, and see what he will say. But a great point is that in ante-railway days we lived with more composure, not so restless and given to change. One and the same set of neighbours more generally continued to surround us, whereas now 'man never continueth in one stay'—all is change, and families seem ever on the wing.

It may also be objected that we had no penny post, but eight-penny and tenpenny letters in those days. But then we were

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not always excited or nervous about the postman's knock—at most but once a day. Letters were few and far between. The extra fret and worry of our penny letters, circulars and all, does no little to keep up 'life's fretful fever.' The heart throbs all the faster, and, therefore, as Long-fellow says, 'beats funeral marches to the grave.'

If we often are, at a friend's dictation, hurried off a hundred miles as a mere trifle—for some family wedding or to see the last new baby—we are equally far from remaining free agents as to hurry and flurry if the demand for a return of post reply gives more extra beats to the same vital organ. Shall anybody say that this is a slight matter—to live liable to have your pulse quickened at the caprice of any intrusive fellow who likes to write, and to have so much more vital force taken out of your system *volens volens*? Shall any one say that this is not a great set-off against these modern facilities, however valuable when we really want them?

'But of the telegraph—wonders on wonders—what do you say? We say the same, that there is nothing for nothing in this world—no rose without a thorn. There is a Nemesis in all these acknowledged blessings. Man's nervous system pays the smart, and that pay no little, for the convenience. A man's heart in these days has become like the dial of the said telegraph: he is at the mercy of any man at the end of any one of many hundred wires able, at his caprice, to send an electric shock to his system. All this makes us live too fast; the cares and brain work once spread over a week or a month come pulsing and throbbing and chasing each other in a single day. Life has

lost no little of its old-time composure. The game of life is like short whist instead of long. Three events come off in the time for one. All is at high pressure and a breathless pace.

'The eternal worry of maid-servants,' of which we hear so much, is only another result of our boasted facilities of locomotion. A girl no longer limited to your home circle, where her character might be known for good or for ill, reads her mistress's *Daily Telegraph*, picks out an advertisement, and gives sudden notice that, 'to better herself,' she has decided on a place just heard of some fifty miles off. All this independence of local ties, and of the opinion of those above them, cannot fail to be the loss of much moral influence, nor can all these facilities for the scattering of the people fail to render all government difficult, with a lawless and democratic effect on the national character.

But what will you say to our wondrous inventions—the extension of our manufactures—the cheapening of things both for the use and the elegances of life? Once more we answer, that though these things are acknowledged blessings, they are not blessings without alloy. The rural population is fast turning into a manufacturing and a town population, exchanging the fresh breezes of the country for the malaria of the streets; many a field being poisoned by the black smoke from these tall chimneys, and many a beautiful stream running foul or purple with the waters from the mill. These people, if richer at times and better clad, are they necessarily healthier or happier? Are they not far more than the rural population liable to sudden reverses and changes from demoralising plenty to the

depths of poverty, because briek trade tempts numbers of labourers, far too many in days of overtrading and of glut, to compete for the wages of the town! It is painful to sit down and seriously to reflect on the consequences, present and to come, of this crowding into towns—no small offset to the glories of our commercial pride. Is it no drawback to our boasted inventions and division of labour that our machinery turns men into machines? —‘the iron entering even into their souls’—as it condemns human beings with immortal souls to head pins all their life, or in many ways to form, as it were, one of a hundred cogs in the big wheel of Glasgow life! Is it nothing to stunt the bodies of men and cut short half their days in grinding forks or dipping phosphorus matches, and thus entailing an enfeebled physique from generation to generation? Nor is this all. Our overdone manufacturing system tends to increase the very population which it serves thus to degrade and degenerate. Marriages, say the Registrars, are promoted by two opposite causes. The first cause is great trading prosperity; because in such times people feel they can afford it. The second cause is a strike or turn off of hands; because then people are so miserable they think they cannot possibly do worse!

This festering town population, yearly on the increase, is indeed a price to pay for our commercial advantages. There you have thousands congregated together in a limited space, all on about the same dead level, owning neither reverence nor allegiance to any superior, and strangers even to the very masters who employ them, and thus removed far from all feudal ties or from any one principle that can elevate or

civilise them. A London magistrate, knowing well the danger of such a lawless and uncontrollable mass—a brute power which you have only to see a Hyde Park meeting or even an illumination night to realise—said every day when he rose in the morning he felt it a mercy that London had not been sacked in the night.

There has been a sensible change in the health and constitution of men during the high pressure and express speed of this go-ahead generation. Witness the change of liquors; strong ale, bowls of punch, and port-wine are almost things of the past. Doctors tell us how by fast living the brain is exhausting the body, and it has become the fashion to trace our maladies to our nerve centres. No doubt the national constitution is sensibly affected. Perhaps we have not yet arrived at the hurry and flurry of life in America, where men bolt their dinner with knitted brows and excited brain, and off to business with the viands in their throats; but the same causes are fast betraying us into the same effects. The nervous temperament is predominating over the sanguineous, and we may say, in the spirit of Horace, to a nervous progeny will be transmitted the nerves of their sires. The Romans, in making an empire, unmade themselves, and the native vigour of barbarian hordes proved too much for an effete civilisation.

Another point on which men congratulate themselves in our commercial eminence is our banking and financial system. What if we had to keep and count out our money, to collect our own dividends, and to dispense with cheques and bills of exchange? With our existing arrangements, a few millions only of gold lie idle to give confidence in thousands of

millions of commercial transactions. If payments were all in specie, some twenty railway wagons, it has been calculated, would be required to convey the gold that daily is represented by paper down Lombard Street; whereas now, by exchange of balances at the clearing-house, the alteration of a few figures in the accounts of the respective bankers at the Bank of England settles all differences without a single sovereign passing. This saves the loss of interest on millions of gold, otherwise to be kept profitless for this single purpose. This also facilitates commerce to an extent of untold millions otherwise utterly impossible.

All very true; but, *per contra*, when Lord Overbury was once asked, with reference to this ingenious system, what kind of wreck and wholesale bankruptcy, with consequent starvation and riot in manufacturing districts, where thousands of labourers would be suddenly without wages, he would anticipate, if an enemy landed and held its ground one month in England, he replied, as incalculably ruinous and terrible beyond all conception, 'It must not be!' Is it, then, no set-off to all these advantages to live as over a volcano? For, with all the bills, paper money, and bank credits daily existing as so many promises to pay, there exists not a hundredth part of the specie required to pay them, and our only safety is that any large proportion of creditors do not happen to want specie at the same time. London Bridge is wide enough because there is no sudden rush of panic-stricken thousands all at once. So our reserve of specie is big enough for quiet times; but there is not a merchant in London but would be insolvent if all London were rushing for payment in

specie at the same time. We realise this even in a comparatively small way when there is a Black Friday in the City; even the Bank of England wants relief, and houses otherwise prosperous, leaning one upon another, fall like a child's house of cards. Lord Macaulay wrote that, in the wars of Charles's time, an army marching through one farm left the neighbouring farms just as before; whereas, with the commercial combinations of these days, a war in England would be felt for years at the further corners of the globe. The truth is, we are no longer units, but links in one world-encircling commercial chain; and millions find that the conditions of modern life expose their nervous system to the liability of shocks peculiar to these advanced and supposed preëminently happy days. Here, again, we are not denying our advantages; we are only contending that, if we have them, we pay for them, and enjoy (if we do enjoy) the blessings of this generation by a sacrifice of the calm composure of the generation past. Thousands live with knitted brows and racking brains; and, while a savage will face death unmoved, the City man turns pale at a fall of one per cent.

All these facilities are also snares. 'Riches' nowadays may truly be said to have 'wings'—paper wings—with which, too, the modern Icarus is ever threatened with a collapse. Civilisation is very hard on some of these gentlemen. Many a man who now loses his head among acceptances, scrip, and *omnium*, would have been quite able to manage Job's estate in flocks and herds, and kept out of difficulties. We once sent a spendthrift to a colony, with good results. He no longer ran in debt, because no one would trust him, and his small stock of pru-

dence proved equal to this primitive state of things. It is hard to rob you of acres of land, or to drive off more than part of a flock of sheep; but your agent, with shares and coupons, may be off to America with all your fortune in his pocket, or perhaps cheat you of it by the scratch of your pen. Adam Smith said that this world was not in favour of men of sanguine temperament. An Irishman enjoys what he calls his hundred a year, though 'faith, it is only for one year;' but a Scotchman would have no appetite for the dinner of to-day if he doubted dinners ahead for many a year. The ups and downs of life and sudden reverses multiply in the ratio of our national prosperity. The more trade, the more bankrupts, and a failure at the Antipodes shuts up even mansions in Belgravia. Feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, and severe fretting of the nerves at all times, and occasionally a jar on our very heartstrings, are what we pay for being born in this luxurious generation.

Again, we do not deny the treasures of our libraries, nor the world-wide collections of the daily press. We wish not the sun of civilisation to go back upon the dial; but are we the happier or the wiser for it? At least, were our tastes or our intellects ungratified before? Certainly not. The mind, like the mill, can only convert a certain quantity, and is burdened and clogged with excess. Hobbes said, 'If I had read as many books as some other men, I should know as little.' And Southey, in the library of the British Museum, exclaimed, 'Had I studied in this place, I should have been too distracted by all this literary wealth to bring any one subject to perfection.'

Men exclaim, 'These are pros-

perous times,' and seem to pity those who lived in a less luxurious and wealthy age. They forget that wealth is relative, and that to all but the destitute, and those without 'food and raiment' enough 'to be content,' wealth is chiefly the field in which men compete and rival each other for social position; and when all are equally enriched, the result so far is the same. The weekly list of wills proved shows how much richer men die nowadays, but not how much happier they live. 'A rich man,' said Adam Smith, 'is only a large distributor;' and he might have added, he cannot be free from the harassing or the jealousies of this distribution. A costly establishment, with elegant furniture and dashing equipages, cannot but be an addition to our cares and anxieties if we take any interest in them, and of only nominal value to us if we take none. Many a rich man is a slave to his own servants when they outnumber his family out of all proportion. One of a dozen servants once was heard to say, 'This is our establishment, and master and mistress are our house-keepers.' The larger the fortune spent, the greater the load of life—very low life too—with which you must encumber yourself. Charles V. was one of very few who ever abdicated a throne; but thousands have retired from high positions, and ended their days in retirement, feeling, 'Miserable comforters are you all.' And since all that adds to the elegance and splendour of our houses widens the gulf between the dainty habits of the mansion and the dirt of the cottages, in which alone our servants can be reared, no wonder that the cry about inefficient servants is daily louder and louder, when everybody is richer, everybody keeps more servants, till

the stock of good servants is exhausted. When the cream is gone you come to the skim-milk. The master finds he has daily less control: the supply dictates to the demand. Servants engage masters and mistresses quite as truly as the latter engage them, and the result of the boasted riches of the day is simply this—that you keep open house for the lower orders, of a class daily more and more independent and useless. A hundred years ago wine was sparingly introduced at table; fifty years ago, chiefly the cheaper wines were expected; now champagne is everywhere. But has society become more pleasant with these rises in expense? No; society is more trouble and more fatiguing to the hosts, and therefore many enjoy less of it, or crowd their rooms, making one party serve for two or three, a mere pretence at 'a return'—too truly a 'meeting of creditors'—too happy when it is over.

For luxury and superfluities of all kinds we do penance. 'Pleasure,' says Shakespeare, 'with repetition souring, turns to pain!' All pleasure is no pleasure, and all holidays no holiday. This is too trite and obvious; but what seems not so obvious is that man cannot live by proxy. Nature cries, 'Work;' and inexorably does she avenge her broken law. We must either rub out or rust out. What we spare in aching limbs we suffer in a sinking heart. 'My daughters want tonics,' said a lady to Sir C. Clarke. 'Yes, ma'am. Nature's tonic—work.' Idleness, an aimless life, and *ennui*. Nature avenges on the nervous system. Our many servants, if called blessings, are a curse. Ladies wanted little of doctors' tonics in old-fashioned times, when they worked the servants under them. 'But it is

not the fashion.' 'No, not the fashion to be healthy—no fault of mine,' replied the doctor.

We are creatures of a twofold nature, a two-stringed lyre, and the mistake is in harping upon one string. Our happiness, to use the terms of Bishop Butler, depends on two things: the satisfaction of active habits and the excitement felt from passive impressions; that is, impressions from without, when we are acted on, as distinguished from the said activities where our powers are called into action. Here we have a life of usefulness on the one hand and a life of pleasure on the other. But nineteen parts in twenty of the satisfaction of life consist in our said activities: their sphere is unlimited, for our facilities and sense of progress become ever greater and greater from exercise. But as to a life of impressions, of pleasure of all kinds, our capacity for this kind of enjoyment is not only very limited, but it becomes less and less on repetition. The appetite is satiated, and luxuries sicken. Exciting pleasures lose their powers to please from exhaustion or deadened feelings. The human lyre is out of tune, and there is no response from within. Nor is there any state more pitiable than that of the effete worn-out man of pleasure. This is the penalty he pays for seeking the nineteen parts of his pleasure where, from the very constitution of our nature, only their one-twentieth part is to be found.

Now, every one would wish to be rich, and regards a child born to a fortune as very favourably situated in life. But here again our blessings are by no means unqualified, because riches—we mean if more than moderate—can with difficulty be enjoyed without destroying the very balance we have just explained. The nineteen



parts are sacrificed to the one, if, indeed, even that one part of pleasure does not turn to pain. The happiest state to which life admits is that of a man who has a constant occupation and interest in his calling. The late Lord Derby, in a lecture, said: 'Every man who lives an aimless, useless life is miserable, and deserves to be so.' Riches make a man, in a common phrase, his own master; but he is too indulgent a master. We commonly want necessity, if not as a stimulus, at least to decide our choice. Labour, as we said, is Nature's tonic, and the very condition of our well-being. The rich man must labour to get an appetite for his dinner, the poor man to get a dinner for his appetite. Railways enable and tempt us to rush about, north, south, east, and west, for change—that is, in search of happiness;

though, as Horace said, 'it is as much at home as at Ulubrae.' 'No man can run away from himself.' 'They change the air, but not themselves, who fly beyond the sea.'

And the same may be said of all the inventions and improvements of the last fifty years. Men had all the means and implements of happiness before; and, save the labourer, who is warmer and better fed, men now have simply a more distracting choice of means, the degree of happiness of which they are capable remaining much the same. There is one, and one only, kind of improvement by which we can really be affected: namely, the social, the moral, and, in the truest sense, the Christian state of those around us—where envy, hatred, and all unkindness are little known, and we enjoy the calm serenity of a sphere of charity and loving-kindness.

J. PYCROFT.

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## MR. BULSTEAD'S SURPRISE.

MR. BULSTEAD'S third and last letter bore the Oxford postmark ; as he opened it he frowned. His niece, who had long ago noted that particular letter with apprehension, helped him in haste to the hottest and choicest kidney on the dish. Maggie knew well that of late the contents of letters from Oxford were far from welcome.

'Now, I will not stand this any longer!' cried the irritable old gentleman, dashing his fist upon the table, and narrowly missing the just arrived and juicy kidney. 'Now, Master Tom has tried my patience once too often ! Bill after bill have I settled during the last three months, expecting each to be the last ; and, forsooth, listen to this, miss ! To five hundred lawn-tennis balls, 12*l.* 10*s.* ; to rackets, as per former account, 8*l.* 10*s.* ; to marking-machines, 4*l.* ; to—good gracious !—to half a ton of whiting, 4*l.* ; total, 29*l.* ! Good gracious ! I say ; does the young scapegrace live upon whiting ?'

'O, it must be a mistake, uncle !'

'Mistake, indeed ! Why, did not I have a bill of 2*l.* 10*s.* for dog-collars ? Was that a mistake too ? And the wine bill, and Symonds's bill for horse-hire ? All mistakes, of course ! You may thank your stars, young lady,' cried the old gentleman, abandoning the indignantly satirical for the savagely personal tone, 'that I would not let you tie yourself to this extravagant nephew of mine. Now I've done with him, and so have you.'

Maggie rose from the table with a flushed face, and looked from the window with eyes that saw little of the square outside through their tears. But, like a wise girl, she kept silence, and the kind-hearted old gentleman, after storming once or twice up and down the room, began to cast uneasy glances at the graceful figure by the window. If there was one person whom Mr. Bulstead loved before and above the cause of his present anger, it was his niece Maggie Lloyd.

'Well, well,' said he, sitting down to his now cold kidney. 'There, my dear, give me another cup of tea. Half a ton of whiting—the lad must have gone mad !'

'It might have gone in worse things than whiting,' she suggested humbly, but with a humorous quiver at the corner of a pretty mouth.

'So it might ; that's true.' The old gentleman was a little more straitlaced than most Londoners. 'I'll tell you what, Maggie : I'll give Tom one more chance. I'll go down to Oxford by the eleven-o'clock train, giving him no notice, and see for myself what sort of life he is living. If he is doing nothing worse than waste money, I'll forgive him ; but if I find the young fellow is as vicious as some of those Oxford sparks, why, then'—and Mr. Bulstead's voice assumed a quite unaccustomed tone of cool determination—'I've done with nephew Tom.'

Maggie trifled with the teaspoon, her eyes bent upon her plate. Her uncle's irritability was little to be feared ; it was

more than neutralised by his kindness of heart. But she knew him to be on rare occasions, and in some matters, a man of great obstinacy; and, loving her cousin with all her heart, she dreaded the result of her uncle's projected trip. Tom would be doing nothing dreadful, but he might be doing something Mr. Bulstead might object to. To move her uncle from his resolve, once expressed in this way, she knew to be beyond even her influence; the more as the old gentleman, who had a few months before forbidden any express engagement between the cousins, was a little inclined to resent any influence she might try to exert in Tom's behalf.

'I shall not want any more tea, thank you, so you may go to your music-lesson, if you like. I shall just go to the Athenæum for an hour, and then to Paddington. I'll leave orders about the carriage, and if you like you can meet the six-o'clock train with it.'

When Mr. Bulstead reached his club he found, to his disgust, that his favourite chair was occupied by a bishop. Had it been any one else, he would not have scrupled at attempting to oust him by one of those forms of strategy so well known in club-rooms; but as it was, he ran his eye over the *Times* 'all standing,' and took his seat in a cab not in the best of tempers. 'Half a ton of whiting!' he muttered to himself, in tones of fretful speculation, as he passed through Park Lane.

He felt a little like a spy as he hurried across Canterbury Quad, and made with all speed for the bottom of Tom's staircase. The scout, old 'Dot and go one,' as he was called, from his wooden leg, in vain essayed to detain him. Up went Mr. Bulstead two

steps at a time to the second-floor, where, above the left-hand door, where, in white letters upon a black ground, his own name. He knocked sharply, and, hardly waiting for some one within to utter what might or might not be 'Come in,' threw it open, and entered. Lounging upon one of the window-seats, in flannels and a cigarette in his mouth, was a young fellow, whose good-looking face was rather manly and straightforward than handsome. He was alone, and got up without much appearance of flurry.

'How do you do, uncle? I thought it was you crossing the quad. Take a seat. Why did you not let me know that you were coming?'

Mr. Bulstead took the proffered seat, and panted as he looked round. The stairs were steep, and his wind was not so good as it had been.

'I thought I would come upon you a bit by surprise, Tom,' he said, without any circumlocution. 'The fact is, it is that whiting that has brought me.'

'Whiting, uncle!' ejaculated Tom, with his first show of surprise.

'Half a ton of whiting!' murmured his uncle, irresistibly impelled to dwell upon the mystery. 'Half a ton of whiting! Ay, here it is.' And he flourished the bill under the other's nose.

Tom took it gingerly, and opened it with a serious face. It seemed to Mr. Bulstead that he was not quite so much at his ease as he would have his uncle believe, and the old gentleman glanced suspiciously round the room. It certainly was not the room of a hard-working, hard-reading student; but still there was nothing objectionable in it. He turned his glance again upon Tom; the latter was contemplating

the bill with a broad smile genuine enough.

'Well,' said Mr. Bulstead, 'what have you to say about it? Half a ton of whiting, you know, Tom?'

The young man laughed loudly.

'I am not in fault this time, sir; it is the Lawn Tennis Club's account sent in to me as secretary. I gave the ground-man the cheque to pay it last week; and why they should have had the impudence to send it in to you I can't imagine.'

'Umph! but how about the whiting, Tom? What is that for?'

'Marking out the grounds, sir.'

'Of course it is, Tom! Very stupid of me. Well, I'm very glad of it, my boy,' said Mr. Bulstead pleasantly. The mystery of the whiting was cleared up; but somehow it had made him suspicious.

'Now,' said Tom, 'will you come with me to a shop I want to call at in the High—not a hundred yards off, sir? and by the time we come back lunch will be ready.'

Was the dust of that whiting still in Mr. Bulstead's eyes? At any rate, it seemed to him that his nephew was peculiarly and restlessly anxious to get him out of the rooms. However, he rose.

'Yes, Tom, certainly. Where did I put my umbrella? Ah, here it is, thank you. Why—what the—deuce—is—that!'

If it had been another half-ton of whiting piled upon the sofa, the old gentleman's face could not have grown darker. The thing lying half hidden by the sofa-cushion was a lady's parasol—a dainty, tiny, wicked-looking sunshade of gray silk; and by it was a glove of too, too apparent French kid. Mr. Bulstead's worst fears were confirmed with a vengeance; all along he had felt that

there was something wrong: this *was* the haunt of wicked dissipation he had half feared he should find it. Half a ton of whiting, indeed! In a moment, and before he had glanced at the young fellow's confused face, he thought the worst of him.

'Well, sir,' he said, and there was real sorrow as well as anger in the tone, 'can you explain this with equal ease?'

'No, I cannot, sir; but—'

'You can't? Cannot say whose they are, or how they come to be in your rooms? Fie, sir, fie! Or where their owner is now, I suppose?' he added, suddenly recalling the scout's seeming attempts to delay him at the foot of the stairs, and marking the doors that led to two inner rooms.

'I cannot account for them.'

'And will not, I suppose?'

'You can put it that way if you like, sir. All I can say is that I am innocent of what you are thinking of me. I give you my word of honour, I am; and I can't say any more.'

The old man was a little impressed by the younger's earnestness. The obnoxious articles might have been left there innocently, of course.

'Then let me have a look into your other rooms, young man, if you wish me to believe you.'

'No, I can't do that,' cried Tom, springing, as the other advanced, towards the nearer door, and setting his back against it. He was cooler now, and not a bit confused. The old gentleman, even in his anger, noticed that he looked more handsome than ever before.

'Don't be a fool, Tom!' he cried imperatively. Then suddenly changing his tone to an appealing one—'Make a clean breast of it, and I'll try to forgive you.'

'There's nothing to forgive.'

'Then open that door. You won't?'

'No.'

'As I live, if you don't before I count three, I'll cut you off without a shilling. Now, sir: one, two—it's your last chance—three! There, sir, I've done with you now, sir—I've done with you—I've done with you!' And, clapping on his hat, with furious haste and yet shaking steps the old gentleman ran down the stairs, and, his heart full of sorrow and anger, made for the station.

Ah, Tom, Tom! A minute later he opened the inner door, and looked rather anxiously at the half-frightened, wholly pretty face that appeared at it.

'Did you hear anything?' he asked.

'No, but do let me get away. I am so nervous. He was very angry, wasn't he? Yes. What was it about, Tom? Bills?'

'Yes,' was the somewhat halting reply; 'bills and other things. I daresay he'll cool down. If you hear anything against me, you won't believe it, will you?'

'O Tom, how can you ask?'

'Then there is no harm done,' answered Tom bravely and gallantly. And after reconnoitring from the window, the two left the rooms.

To return to Mr. Bulstead senior. It was a great trouble to him. Looking back upon that half-ton of whiting, he wondered how that could have made him angry with the lad. If he would only have kept to that, he could have forgiven him a ship-load of whiting. But this was a different matter, and the more the old gentleman thought of it, the worse it appeared to him. Still, he was a just and fair man; he had no real intention of cutting

off the young profligate, as he termed him in his thoughts, with a shilling. He would make him some sufficient, but small, allowance; but near his house or near Maggie he would not have him.

He made this last determination known to Maggie, merely adding that her cousin had behaved so ill that he had forbidden him the house. The announcement was received with a woman's strongest remonstrances, silent tears. Altogether things were rather gloomy that June in Fitzroy Square.

One morning Mr. Bulstead made up his mind to see his lawyer about Tom. 'I'll get it over,' he said to himself, with a sigh, as he sought for his umbrella in the stand. It took him some time to find.

'Bless the umbrella!' he cried at length, fumbling among the heap. 'Is that it? No! Nor that. Why, what's this? Well, I am dashed!'

Only the word which he used was a stronger one, and one which seldom, even in moments of irritability, escaped him. But now, at the sight of a sunshade in the umbrella-stand, he solemnly repeated it twice: 'Well, I am dashed!'

Then he stood in the hall for some minutes whistling softly to himself. This done, he went rather slowly and thoughtfully up to the drawing-room, and stood on the hearthrug.

'Were you at Oxford when I was there on the 28th of last month?'

'Yes,' answered Maggie, horribly frightened, and yet relieved at getting the matter off her mind. She had not confessed simply because she was afraid of increasing her uncle's anger against Tom. 'Yes, I was, uncle. You said you were going to put Tom to the test, and I was afraid he might

be doing something to displease you. I went to warn him.'

'And you were in his rooms while I was there?'

'Yes. It was foolish of me; you followed me so closely, and I was afraid to face you. Tom put me in the Scout's Hole, as he called it.'

'So you deceived me between you?' said he harshly.

'No, sir; I did. Tom knew nothing of my coming: he was afraid for me, not for himself.'

'Did he tell you what I was angry about?'

'After you were gone?'

'Of course!' snapped Mr. Bulstead, poking the fire vigorously.

'I think,' said Maggie timidly, for now it was Tom's favour was at stake, 'he said it was about bills. He had nothing to do with my journey to Oxford.'

'And a nice ladylike thing you consider it, I suppose, gadding about to young men's rooms. Very well. Since you seem inclined to mix yourself up with his affairs, you will write to him at once, and tell him to come up to town to-morrow and call here. When you are both together I'll

tell you what I think of it. A pretty pair of fools!'

And Mr. Bulstead fumed his way out of the room with much outward heat, and an angry expression of countenance. But the butler, who watched his exit with awe, and opined that there had been stormy weather up-stairs, was amazed to hear him mutter with an audible chuckle as he reached the darkest angle of the staircase, 'Good lad! good lad!'

Tom, of course, came up as fast as the Great Western would bring him; and when they were both together, Mr. Bulstead told the culprits what he thought of it. No happier trio sat down to dinner that day in London than the party presided over by our friend's butler. Somewhere in the old gentleman's nature was a large lump of the chivalrous, and, for the sake of Tom's gallantry, Maggie's deception was forgiven. In no long time he did visit his lawyer, but it was upon business more pleasant both to himself and to that professional gentleman. 'For a really paying piece of work,' the latter has often been heard to say in confidence, 'give me a marriage settlement.'

J. STANLEY.



## A PROTÉGÉ OF VOLTAIRE.

BACULARD D'ARNAUD.

AMONG the innumerable aspirants to literary fame in France during the eighteenth century very few can be cited as having commenced their career under the direct patronage of the philosopher of Ferney. A word or two of condescending approval, and perhaps a gracious reception of some juvenile essay, were in general the sole favours accorded by him to the many youthful votaries of the Muse, by whom a pilgrimage to the classic retreat of the author of the *Henriade* was regarded as an indispensable step to future distinction. Why the subject of our notice should have been singled out by him as an exception to his usual mode of proceeding has never been satisfactorily ascertained; it is, however, certain that, in a letter addressed in 1736 to the Abbé Moussinot, he requests his correspondent to send for a young man named Baculard d'Arnaud, a student of philosophy at the college of Harcourt, at present residing in the Rue Mouffetard, and to give him twelve francs. It is possible that the 'young man's' impecunious condition, as described by himself—a very favourite topic with him, as we shall see, in after life—may have awakened the sympathy of the poet by reminding him of his own early struggles, or that in the accompanying verses he may have discerned a promise of talent worthy of encouragement; in either case he appears to have taken a fancy to the penniless collegian, and, besides affording him occasional pecuniary

assistance, to have exerted his influence in behalf of his *protégé* with Helvétius, to whom he recommends him 'as his son.'

With regard to the family of François Baculard d'Arnaud nothing positive is known, nor have the date and place of his birth been officially recorded; if, however, we may trust a statement made by his brother, General d'Arnaud, he was ninety years of age at the time of his death in 1805, and was consequently born in 1715. All that can be gleaned from contemporary accounts respecting him may be summed up in the meagre description that he was extremely tall and proportionally thin, and that he was indebted to the Jesuits for his education. No portrait of him, engraved or otherwise, is believed to exist; nor do we find in his voluminous correspondence—mostly consisting of pressing requests for money, or, as in an autograph note we have before us while we write, for 'a dinner'—any particular trait characteristic of the man. With such insufficient materials, anything beyond a brief summary of his career is manifestly impossible; it may, nevertheless, not be altogether uninteresting, with the aid of such scanty landmarks as we possess, to trace step by step the chequered existence of a now forgotten celebrity, who began his literary life under the flattering auspices of Voltaire, and ended it, according to Collin de Planey, as too many of his brethren in Apollo have done, in a garret.

The precise nature of the employment procured by the obliging Helvétius for the *ci-devant* collegian is not stated; but that it was enough for his wants is presumable from a letter addressed by the latter to his original patron, wherein he alludes to a comedy entitled *Le Mauvais Riche*, the plan of which he encloses, as the occupation of his leisure hours. To this Voltaire, who, it would seem, had some reason to complain of his correspondent on the score of negligence and unpunctuality, replies in the following style: 'I congratulate you on having at last made up your mind to write legibly on a proper sheet of paper, to seal your letter with wax, and even to enter into details as to what you are doing. The change is certainly to your advantage, if it only lasts, and you do not again fall into your lazy habits. Do not in any case let these interfere with the progress of *Le Mauvais Riche*; your literary reputation is of more consequence than the pleasure I derive from your letters. I like your plan much, and augur well from the pains you apparently devote to the composition of your comedy, not having seen a line of it for the last three months.'

It was not, however, by the cultivation of his talent as a dramatist that Baculard was destined, in the first instance at least, to attain notoriety; a moment of inspiration sufficed to class him among the popular versifiers of the day. His *Epistle to Manon*, a somewhat indecorous production in the style of Gentil Bernard, the opening stanza of which—all we can venture to quote—runs as follows:

'Je sais bien, ma chère Manon,  
Que tu n'es point une duchesse,  
Que dans sa compilation  
Moréri nous tait ta noblesse,

Mais le charme de cent beautés,  
Sur ton teint mille fleurs écloses,  
Quatorze ans à peine comptés,  
Quatorze ans! ce sont bien des choses!"

exactly hit the taste of the town, and was in everybody's hands before it had been published a week. Nay more, it obtained for its author the enviable and lucrative post of literary correspondent to Frederick the Great, in allusion to which Voltaire writes: 'I must compliment you, my dear friend, both on your appointment and on your *Epistle to Manon*; and sincerely trust that the one may make your fortune, as I am certain that the other will advance your reputation. Manon, whoever she may be, is happy in having an admirer and a poet like you.'

Unfortunately for Arnaud, the good understanding between him and his old patron came soon after to a close; the jealous susceptibility of the latter resenting the arrival at Berlin of his former protégé, in compliance with the express desire of the King. No intrigues, no misrepresentations were neglected by him in order to prejudice Frederick against his visitor; the idea that the new-comer might possibly supplant him in the monarch's favour was too mortifying to his vanity to be passively endured, and he did not hesitate a moment to exert whatever influence he still possessed over his royal protector to the detriment of his supposed, although utterly unconscious, rival. The result was not difficult to foresee. Finding it necessary to choose between the dismissal of a comparative stranger and the threatened departure of Voltaire, Frederick naturally preferred the easier alternative; and poor Baculard, the victim of these unworthy manoeuvres, returned disconsolately to Paris, having gained nothing by his journey save a bit-

ter experience of the inconstancy of princely favour.

Once more compelled to depend on his own exertions for subsistence, his allowance from Berlin having necessarily ceased on the revocation of his appointment, he set manfully to work, and in a short space of time, by the number and variety of his productions, succeeded in attaining a recognised position among the popular writers of the day. Abandoning the questionable style which had characterised his *Epistle to Manon*, he adopted one peculiarly his own, especially intended to touch the susceptible hearts of his lady readers, and not inaptly termed by a contemporary critic the 'lachrymose.' In everything he wrote, whether novel or play, tears formed the principal ingredient; his personages wept and sighed in mournful unison from the commencement to the close, and it is presumable that those who perused his melancholy effusions were similarly affected; for Monselet affirms that, although several copies of *Les Délassements de l'Homme Sensible* have passed through his hands, he never yet found one 'completely dry.' Of this harrowing tale, published by subscription, fifteen hundred copies—a very respectable total at that period—were disposed of in a few days, and the majority of his dramas sold equally well; only two of them, however, made their appearance on the stage, namely, the *Comte de Comminges*, for which the author received a 'gratification' of a hundred louis from Marie Antoinette, and *La Mort de Coligny*, performed during the Revolution at the Théâtre Molière.

And yet, notwithstanding the considerable sums derived from the sale of his works, and occasional subsidies obtained on one

plea or another from the ministerial budget, Baculard d'Arnaud was perpetually in distress for money, and may be said to have literally lived from hand to mouth. At one time, indeed, when his finances were at a lower ebb than usual, he depended for his daily meals on the charity of a sympathising *rôtisseuse*, in reference to which humiliating episode in his career the Jesuit Dulaurens, in his *Chandelle d'Arras*, describes him as

'Sourpirant à côté du gigot  
Le doux Arnaud, le lamentable Arnaud.

A more indefatigable and unscrupulous borrower never existed. It has been gravely asserted that it would be difficult to discover a single individual in France who was not his creditor at least to the amount of a *petit écu*, Chamfort even going so far as to affirm that he owed three hundred thousand francs, advanced in pieces of six sous. His favourite locality for levying contributions is said to have been the Café de la Régence, at that period the resort not only of the better class of Parisians, but also of new-comers from the provinces, who, doubtless, were rarely suffered to depart scot-free. Among his innumerable begging-letters addressed to persons of distinction is a very characteristic one to the Minister Necker, whom he styles the benefactor of France and his own, and coolly solicits the loan of twelve hundred francs, to be repaid in the course of a year from the receipts of three dramas, already offered to the Théâtre Français.\* In conclusion, he asks permission to present his 'tears' to the ambassadress (Madame de Staël). On the back of this epistle is the

\* Two of these were refused, and the third was an utter failure.

following note, in Necker's hand: 'Sent him four louis.'

During the Revolution Arnaud had a narrow escape from the guillotine, having been brought before the tribunal on the apparently well-founded charge of sheltering a 'suspect'; his judges, however, either moved to compassion by his age or unusually inclined to indulgence, acquitted him. In 1800 he was a constant frequenter of a café kept by a certain Madame Simard in the Rue Mouffetard, where he delighted to expatiate on the ingratitude of princes and his own inappreciated merits. He was perfectly affable, and accepted a dinner, or even a *petit verre*, with the most condescending urbanity. His wife, of whose maiden name or origin no mention is recorded, was equally loquacious. She had known Voltaire and the critic Fréron, and detested both. 'Voltaire,' she used to say, 'was so miserly that, when he could do so unobserved, he even pocketed the candle-ends from the King of Prussia's supper-table; and as for Fréron, he cared for nothing but his stomach. One day I met him at dinner, where he was asked to carve his favourite dish—a leg of mutton—and noticed that he had reserved for himself the juiciest slices; so I resolved to spoil his game. "Monsieur Fréron," I said, "pray oblige me by giving me that slice you have so carefully hidden under the knife." He never forgave me for it.'

It is difficult at the present time to form a just estimate of

so entirely forgotten a writer as Baculard d'Arnaud, not one modern reader in a thousand having probably ever read a line of his works, or perhaps ever heard of his name. That he was unquestionably popular in his day is evident from the fact that many of his productions have gone through several editions, and that as late as 1803, two years before his death, a complete collection of them, in twenty-three volumes, commanded a ready sale. Between 1768 and 1774 a handsome edition of his dramas\* was published, illustrated with engravings after Eisen, the few existing copies of which still possess a certain value. Much of his success as a writer of fiction may doubtless be attributed to the novelty of the style adopted by him, which, although immeasurably inferior in grace and poetical sentiment, and lamentably disfigured by exaggeration, has occasionally an *avant-goût* of *Werther*. It must, however, be confessed that he carried his passion for the 'lachrymose' a little too far, and depended too exclusively for his effects on what he termed the 'chord of sensibility.' 'There are chords,' as Mr. Guppy would say, which it requires infinite delicacy to handle, an important consideration, unfortunately, for the duration of his celebrity, not sufficiently taken into account by the quondam *protégé* of Voltaire.

\* It may incidentally be remarked that Marie Joseph Chénier borrowed more than one idea for his *Charles IX.* from Arnaud's *Mort de Coligny*.

CHARLES HERVEY.

## TUMBLEDOWN FARM.

BY ALAN MUIR, AUTHOR OF 'CHILDREN'S CHILDREN,' 'LADY BEAUTY,'  
'GOLDEN GIRLS,' ETC.

### CHAPTER VII.

#### GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY?

'She paused, she turned away, she hung  
her head.

The seeming simple-hearted injured  
thing  
Came to her old perch back, and nestled  
there.

He saw  
A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
Upright and flushed before him.'

TENNYSON, *Idylls of the King*.

DROWNING men, it is said, behold the whole length of life, illuminated by one flash of consciousness. So there are moments when, though our minds are spinning in a whirlpool of agitation, reason works with unusual rapidity and precision: agitation imparts a facility to thought, which is unknown in our calm hours.

Vanity was gone. Willie Snow was struggling with a rush of feeling, violent and turbid, like a mill-race; and yet he weighed his sweetheart in the balance more carefully than he could have weighed her in his quietest mood. In common conversation she was frivolous and malapert: against this fault he put the tremulous earnestness of her voice in this last supreme moment. Her eyes mostly darted light coquettish rays: now he recalled them, big with anguish, as she flew from his side. The insinuations against her character were grave, and not more grave than reasonable: he rebutted these by recalling her manner of reply when he had asked if she were married; for in his

ears—deluded boy!—the ring of truth and the light of honour were in her tone and look. Whereupon I remark that, when a young woman is in the habit of receiving a matter of, let us say, ten-and-sixpence a night for making faces to order, she can look demure or heart-broken at very short notice. But this never occurred to Willie. Vanity was a true woman, after all, and worthy of his affection. Thus he answered his own deepest doubt; and then he turned to other matters. She loved him; she could not marry him; and yet her hand was free! What could these things mean? The brook babbling on at his feet picked up her words, and repeated them as it chattered over the stones—'Something runs between us that must divide us for ever; it is red as blood, hot as fire, cruel as death!'

'O!' groaned poor Willie.  
'What can her sorrow be?'

Chatter went the brook, brawling against the stones, and rushing in twenty noisy little rapids, but answering still as it hurried by—'*It is red as blood, hot as fire, cruel as death!*'

'But she is good,' pleaded poor Will, judge, jury, and advocate all in his own breast. 'She must be good. And she loves me! Never was voice like hers without true love!'

But the brook replied as before, and ran off into the gray and ghostly distance, busy and inexorable.

'It is something to have won her heart,' the poor boy sighed. 'Something to have won her heart, even if we never marry.'

This early love is a pretty thing, when a young fellow is satisfied if he can but awaken a feeling of affection in the heart of the girl he is courting, and would die content if she only said, 'I love you.' The odd thing is that in twenty years' time such a couple will be going arm-in-arm through their bit of world, just like any other husband and wife, neither better nor worse, scuffling now and then as occasion arises. Well, snowdrops cannot bloom under August skies; yet I like to see the snowdrop hanging its pretty bells in the sunlight spring after spring. And a pure passion between a young man and a young woman is pleasant to see, though one knows it must end like all that went before it, scorched and faded by our hot dusty life.

Willie soon recovered his spirits. Counsel for the prisoner has tolerably easy work when beauty is at the bar and love is on the bench.

'Vanity loves me!' quoth the deluded boy. 'That much is sure. Vanity loves me—loves me—loves me tenderly!'

Repeating the words over and over, you observe, which we all know makes your fact more of a fact than ever. What, then, about the unknown obstacle? Why, he had taken heart, and the more he scrutinised it, swathed as it was in mystery, the less he feared. He would unroll this dread secret, and find it something commonplace enough—something to laugh at, say this day ten years! Who can measure the power this beautiful girl gained over him in that brief space when she melted into womanliness? A little while after

their parting, his conflict of feeling had settled down into two thoughts: 'She is good,' which built him up, being a respectable young man; 'She loves me,' which set him on fire, being a combustible young man. And between 'She is good' and 'She loves me,' swing went that lad's mind, to and fro, to and fro, regular and steady as a pendulum.

He was a fine fellow, as I have said many times, but, perhaps, a little weak, and disposed to lean on the judgment of others. He had not that firmness of spirit which enables a man to pursue the purpose of his life silent and self-contained. So, although for the time he was fully convinced of Vanity's goodness, he told me every word of his last conversation with Vanity, and asked my opinion. Which, at the moment, was much as if he should have said,

'Dr. Book, I believe one and one make two. But would you mind stating your views on the point?'

However, I gave him my opinion of Miss Vanity Hardware straight enough.

'The young woman is an actress.'

'A what?' cried Willie.

'An actress,' I repeated. 'A real live actress! Two pound a week, and find your own frocks! Puff yourself, and paint yourself, and go out with a pair of eyes full of theatre-tears, and tell your stage-lover, in a dying voice, that your heart is breaking; or set up as an example of filial piety, and take in sewing to keep your aged father out of the workhouse. The house applauds, and thinks better of human nature. And human nature in the telling frock takes advantage of the applause to ogle the stalls. O, rubbish and nonsense, Will! The young woman



is an actress, and, believe me, she is playing a part *you* don't understand !

'If you had seen her!' he exclaimed fervently. 'If you had heard her?'

'O Will, Will,' said I, 'you are a very young man—twenty-two, by the almanac ! And when you divide twenty-two you get eleven. There you are ! Heart aged twenty-two, head just turned eleven !'

Do you know, he bore it all ! So next I paid him a compliment or two. *Then*, having an eye to business, I spoke of Nancy Steele. Without giving Will time to say much this way or that, I praised her looks, her thrift, her snug fortune—whatever was attractive about her.

'In this matter of marriage, keep in the safe, sober, common-sense track,' said I. 'Do as other people do, and you are most likely to do well. Nancy is the girl for you. She will make you happy, and she will keep you respectable. What do you know about Miss Hardware ! Simply that she is pretty ; so are scores of women. And that she can cry when she wants to make a fool of you ; so can every woman.'

I shook his resolution a little, I could see. He seemed not quite so full of Miss Vanity when he went out as when he came in. Willie was always apt to think that whoever spoke last spoke best, which is a merit in a man who hears your advice last, otherwise it is a fault. The upshot was that he suffered affairs between Nancy and himself to go on as before : he civil to her ; she civil to him. Nancy must have seen that he kept out of her way, but she took no notice of the alteration in his conduct, being, as I have already pointed out, a long-headed girl.

However Willie's purpose might waver before an adverse opinion, his affection soon returned to what was now the natural quarter. Vanity Hardware had won his heart. In point of fact, nothing but diffidence and the fear of being thought foolish kept him from making confessions of his love to his friends. But Tumbledown Farm being still a mystery to the whole village, and none knowing whence the Hardwares came, or how they managed to live, Willie felt afraid to mention his sweetheart's name openly. So he dallied with Nancy, loved Vanity, and spoke not a word to anybody, except to me. After their parting at the brook, ten days elapsed without his seeing her again. Evening after evening he paced the same road, watching eagerly at every turn for the flutter of Vanity's white dress, but all in vain. Meanwhile, by every honourable means he tried to learn something about her and her father ; but when the information he picked up was put together with that which I had learned myself elsewhere, we remained, for all practical purposes, as much in the dark as ever. Now, with what can a chapter end better than a big note of interrogation ?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FROM WEEPING TO LAUGHTER.

'The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen

As is the razor's edge invisible,

Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen

Above the sense of sense ; so sensible

Seemeth their conference ; their conceits

have wings

Fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought,

swifter things.'

*Love's Labour Lost.*

THE Hardwares kept no regular servant. An old charwoman was engaged to do the housework and

the cooking, coming in at seven in the morning and leaving punctually at one. At five she returned, and did such farther turns as were needful; and at eight she left for the night. Of old Mr. Hardware this woman saw little or nothing. He never came down to breakfast; and he would not suffer her to enter any room where he might happen to be. She had the strictest orders from Miss Vanity never to speak to him unless he first spoke to her.

'Which,' the old lady said, 'no one would want to, neither. Catch I speaking to he! But Miss Vanity do run after un upstairs *and* down, morning *till* night!'

Cross-examined, the old lady declared that no visitor ever came near the house. Further cross-examined concerning the strange man whom I had seen with Miss Hardware, she alleged that she knew nothing of him. It was impossible he could be often at the Farm without her knowledge. Did Miss Vanity write many letters? No. Nor receive many? No. (Miss Vanity read a deal, and would sing as she went about the house for all the world like a thrush. Volunteered by witness.) Was the old gentleman a kind father? She dared say; it was all coughing, and wheezing, and groaning morning, noon, and night. Did the old gentleman drink? Poor old soul! not a drop—lived on gruel and dry toast. Did Miss Vanity seem happy? Well, sometimes she was all for laughing, and sometimes all for crying, and more times she neither laughed nor cried, and there you were! So the old lady's evidence did not go for much. We knew that the Hardwares dealt with the village tradespeople, and paid their bills regularly, which is the best safe-

guard against slander I know of! And when Miss Vanity took the fancy of having the garden done up, Billy Ditcher, who had the job, declared that gentry were all very well, but give him the folk that could hand you half-a-crown where two shillings were due, and tell you to keep the change.

At last the lovers met again. One evening, as Willie looked, with scarcely hopeful eyes, across their favourite field, he saw Vanity standing at the gate, waiting, as she had so often waited before. She was gazing pensively at the distant hills, and did not see Willie until he was at her side. He touched her gently on the arm.

'What brings you here this evening?'

Vanity fixed her eyes upon him.

'Fate!' she answered, in a composed voice, as if she had prepared the reply a week before.

This was a grave beginning, but suited Willie's mood better than the cheeriest greeting. He took up the thread of their former conversation just where Vanity had so abruptly broken it.

'The last time we met, you said you loved me—did you not?'

'I did.'

'Vanity,' Willie cried, 'I want nothing more in all the world!'

She looked up.

'Nothing more in all the world?' she said, turning his words into a question—'*nothing* more?'

Willie felt thankful for the blundering speech, in which her wit found for him so graceful an opening.

'One thing more!' he cried; 'guess what it is.'

'Willie,' she said, looking at him gravely, 'I have told you. We can never marry.'

In his excitement he had forgotten all she said when they last

met. Now her manner recalled that scene to his mind, and convinced him afresh that a real bar lay between them.

'You love me—you are not married; yet you cannot marry me! What can the reason be? I have it!' he cried. 'You have promised to marry some one else.'

'I have not.'

'Then why may we not marry?'

'The fact is all you need know,' said Vanity; 'the cause is my affair.'

'To get rid of the cause shall be my affair,' replied Willie pluckily. 'And surely, Vanity, you cannot think it improper curiosity if I press you to tell me more about this secret difficulty.'

He pleaded with her, and he soon saw in her manner some fruits of his entreaties. She softened, she warmed; but still she would say nothing. For all that, she seemed to feel a pleasure in being pressed to speak; and Willie, finding that he had power to move her, and that her resolution wavered more and more, besought her to trust him. At last, much as if she felt that his caressing speeches were giving her a dangerous pleasure, she drew herself up, and her firmness returned.

'You must ask me no more.'

But having accomplished so much, was Willie likely now to despair? He renewed his entreaties.

'There can be no obstacle to our marriage!' he cried vehemently—'no possible obstacle which my love and energy will not overcome.'

Vanity fixed upon him a searching look, trying to gauge his sincerity.

He understood what the look meant.

'Yes, you may believe me!' he cried. 'Nothing could alter my love—nothing in the world!'

'Are you sure?'

'As sure as that I live.'

There was a grassy bank beside the gate, and there Vanity sat down, Willie standing hard by, and she plucking at a few tall blades of grass growing at her side. She did not look up.

'Willie, if I loved you—'

'You have told me that you do.'

'If I let my liking for you grow into love,' she went on, in a low voice, 'I would love you till I died. You would take me out of myself, and hold me as your own. Do what you would, be what you would, I could never take back the heart I had given.'

She paused. *He* felt she had more to say.

'Well, Vanity, what then?'

'*You could never love me so.*'

'Why do you say that?' asked Willie, wondering.

'Because you are a manly affectionate boy; but you are afraid of what the world says. You would make your love for me second, and your love of the good opinion of your friends first.'

'I should not. What do you mean?' said Willie—two matters in one breath.

Vanity sat plucking the grass. She spoke with the most curious air of preoccupation, frivolity, and disdain. Who could read the secret of her subtle manner?

'If you knew that there was a fact in my life—an ineffaceable fact—which would leave me open to a sudden shame; something that children ought never to know about a mother, that friends ought never to know about a friend, that a husband ought never to know about his wife, unless he loved her with a love that was unquenchable—what then?'

'I don't quite understand you,' Willie replied, hesitating. '*My* love is unquenchable.'

'If all that were true of me, would you still say what you said just now—that nothing in the world could alter your love?'

'Y-e-s,' answered Willie slowly, 'I believe so.' Then, after a pause, he added, 'Of course it would be nothing *really* disgraceful.'

Vanity rose with a sad smile. She touched him on the cheek. She seemed the elder and the stronger of the two.

'Good-bye, Willie. We must see each other no more.'

'Vanity, what do you mean? Have I offended you?' All these exclamations came in a breath; he could not interpret her manner.

'There is some one waiting to marry you—that girl, Miss Steele. I know all about her,' said Vanity, trying to smile, with her eyes full of tears. 'She is respectable; you will get a good wife, and run no risk. Everybody will say how sensible you are, and praise you and look up to you. That will be nice, you know.'

There was a touch of scorn in her 'That will be nice'—O, such a fine, delicate, stinging scorn! Quite right, Mr. Shakespeare: the mocking wench had a tongue with a razor edge.

'I see how it is,' Willie said, with a mortified air; 'you never really cared for me.'

'Listen,' she answered, in a tone that sank into his very soul. 'If you had been brought up all your life long amongst people who were some thoughtless, some vicious, some selfish, until you hardly knew that there was such a thing as goodness; and if, all of a sudden, you saw somebody who seemed to live a higher life and breathe a purer air, who had grown up surrounded by truth and virtue until he was good without knowing he was good; and if he was as handsome as virtuous, so

that nothing were wanting to make him desirable—' She paused.

'Of whom are you speaking?' asked Willie.

She went on impetuously:

'If you found that you had drawn forth a pure and noble love, which flowed out for you like a delicious stream, promising to gladden a hard scorched life; and if, just as you were going to drink, something told you that you had no right to that love—that you had awakened it only by seeming to be what you were not; that the dreams of your life were as fair as heaven, and the realities base and wretched; that, Willie, Willie!' she cried, starting up wildly—'if the veil were torn off me, you would hate me! If you married me, and the veil were torn off *then*, you would curse me! Go, and let me go! Tell nobody what I have said; let it be a secret between you and myself for ever. Don't write to me—as you value my life, don't write to me! O Willie, Willie, my heart is broken!'

The forced calmness with which she began had changed to frenzy, and the frenzy now changed to weeping. Vanity turned away, and, resting her hands on the gate, bowed down in a fit of crying.

Willie had listened to her with amazement and fear; but whatever prudential motives may have been at work in his breast gave way at the sight of her great sorrow.

'You are nervous and excited,' he said soothingly. 'You must be distressing yourself without reason. There *can* be nothing so bad as you describe. If I heard this secret, depend upon it I should say you had made a mountain of a molehill.'

His words did not comfort her, but they recalled her to herself.

She dried her eyes, and, opening the gate, stepped quietly through.

'It is not much to ask that you will never repeat this conversation to any one,' she said, trying hard to speak calmly. 'Don't mention my name; that will be the greatest kindness you can do me. I must go home now, for my father expects me.'

'Are we to part in this way?' Willie asked.

'We are,' she replied, grown more composed. 'I have been foolish, and I must pay the penalty. Perhaps I have been over-excited too; perhaps I said more than I meant. That is little matter, so long as you don't repeat anything. Forget me, Willie; forget all about me!'

'Forget you!—is it likely, after what I have heard?'

'Then remember me as a boy remembers his first love.'

'And you—how will you remember me?'

In a marvellous way her gay wild manner reappeared. There she stood before him, tossing her head daintily, smilingly, mockingly—just the old flirting Vanity of their first interview.

'Remember you—you? My pretty boy! As a flatterer! As a young lover who came to me reeling off pretty speeches by the yard, like fancy ribbons! As a curious impertinent, who played at question and answer, and got mystified, and lost the game! O, I know how to remember my Willie!'

Was ever laughter like hers? Full of mockery, full of heedlessness, full of wild frivolity and reckless disdain! Willie was petrified with surprise.

'You're an angel, quoth he. Tra la!  
D'ye think so? quoth she. Tra la!'

She caught up a snatch of song, and with a gay, almost impudent,

air, but with the most sparkling execution, she trilled off these scoffing lines. Then she stopped, considered Willie for a moment with mock gravity, then broke anew into laughter.

All the while Willie stood like a statue.

'Good-night, Willie,' she said, dipping him a taunting curtsy. 'Like this style, sir! Good-night!'

And off she went; and he neither spoke nor moved. Presently she returned with a serious face.

'Don't forget your promise. I may be in jest, and I may be in earnest; still, you are not to repeat a word I have said. Remember, that would set people talking, which I hate. And don't write to me; whatever you do, don't write to me.'

'Am I never to see you again?' inquired Willie, finding his speech at last. 'Are we to meet no more?'

'Never, except at this gate,' said Vanity decidedly; 'and never unless you find me here, without asking me to come.' Now she was grave, decisive, almost stern. 'You hear?' she cried.

'I hear.'

'Then—obey.'

And she was gone.

But mark my words: our Mr. Shakespeare knew what he was saying when he remarked that the tongue of a wench can cut a smaller hair than may be seen. In her crying, in her laughing, in her seriousness, we can see Vanity's razor-edge tongue darting like the fang of a snake, but doing work which may be invisible to our eyes, but not to hers. A most designing young woman! Was not Willie Snow her slave? Did she not know it well?

## CHAPTER IX.

## A STRANGE DIALOGUE.

'On the green bank I sat and listened long.'

WILLIE'S behaviour after this last interview puzzled me. From being communicative he suddenly grew reserved. He would tell me nothing; and when I asked him a few questions about Miss Vanity, he fenced and parried in a way that was surprising, considering his frank easy character. I wondered; for at the time, you observe, I did not know the facts. Vanity had sealed the lad's lips, and he never broke silence until fortune set him free. Then, when the bubble burst (I might say when the cat was let out of the bag, only the event was too terrific), the obligation upon him was rather to divulge than to keep the secret. At that time he told me all of this story which is not of my own making.

As I mention myself, let me here record a dialogue overheard by accident, and which will set my readers asking questions, as it set me. Dear heart! how I guessed and wondered! And when at last the awful answer came— But surely this is bad story-telling, throwing out hints about to-morrow's narrative in the thick of to-day's work.

One hot Sunday afternoon I strolled up the old road, and, rambling into one of the fields adjacent to Tumbledown Farm, I sat down under a hedge that threw a grateful shade on the dry hot grass. All was quiet, and, excepting ants, grasshoppers, and such small folk, every creature was taking rest. There was a pool close at hand, over which one great dragon-fly played. Every now and again he would dart to the spot where I sat, hovering there a moment, then back to the

pool, and so to and fro, until I grew tired of watching his flight. How easily one drops asleep in warm weather, and how narrow the space seems that divides waking from waking! One moment I was marking the dragon-fly high in air; then I must have slept an hour; and yet it seemed only a few seconds later when I found myself, with open eyes and open ears, listening to a conversation which was being held on the other side of the hedge. The speakers were hidden from view.

'How long must this waiting go on?' This was in a woman's voice.

'How long must this waiting go on?' A man's voice, harsh and bitter, echoed the question. Then—'As long as I choose; as long as need be.' Just like an old door grinding rusty hinges.

There was a pause, and the woman spoke in a hesitating way, stopping between each word, so that the man had an opportunity of catching her up before she finished a sentence.

'I have been thinking a great deal lately—'

'Thinking a great deal lately?' growled the male voice; 'I know it—thinking a great deal too much, I say. You are not the same person, whatever the reason may be. I don't like it, that's all.'

'They say Canada is a fine country.' Plaintively said, and one could fancy the woman's eyes set wistfully on the distance as she spoke.

'Canada is a fine country,' the harsh voice answered. 'So is America; so is New Zealand; so is China, or Madagascar, or Timbuctoo. Every country is fine where the money is plentiful.'

'Yes, yes,' replied the other; 'but I was thinking of a fine country for openings in life, where



people can make a start together, and get on rapidly.'

'Openings in life?' repeated the man's voice, in a tone of disgust. 'Who wants an opening? *You*, I suppose. And what is the opening to be? Take a school, I hope—for young ladies. Strict attention paid to religion and morality. By the lady principal!'

The man laughed, and his laugh grated more harshly than his growl. How I longed to see the speakers! But this was impossible.

'Anyway, waiting on here is dreary,' I heard the woman say, sighing as she spoke—'dreary as death.'

'Dreary as death?' the other retorted, in a note of odious mimicry. 'Well, dreary or cheery, here we stay until—'

'Until when?' she asked eagerly.

'Until we are signalled that the line is clear.'

After this I thought the talk was over, so long a pause came.

'I wish it had never been done!' the woman said at last. 'Or that it could be undone. *Can* it be undone?'

'What?' cried the other: the word leaped out like a sudden snarl from the mouth of a dog.

'I mean—I mean—'

'I mean,' broke in the man's voice, 'that this kind of talk won't do. D'ye hear? Remember, once in your life you vexed me before. *You* know what followed; or perhaps you forget?'

The triumphant malignity of this last was past description.

'As you please, then,' the woman replied. 'Remember, *I* say we ought to leave England.'

'We can't leave England.'

'We might if we tried. I know what will happen if we stay on here. Some day—by accident—somebody will catch sight of—'

She paused—afraid to say more, perhaps.

'Catch sight of what?' the other demanded impatiently.

'Of Joseph Barnitt.'

This she accompanied with a sort of deadly laugh, half-hate, half-terror.

The other made no response.

'Joseph Barnitt is not careful,' she continued, in a timid hesitating way. She must have been afraid of provoking the other, and yet when she repeated the name Joseph Barnitt, she laughed in that deadly way again. 'He drinks too freely—'

Here she was interrupted by an imprecation, but whether it was meant for herself, or for Joseph Barnitt, I could not tell.

'He does, father; he drinks madly. Some day he will be found out. And if people begin to ask questions about Joseph Barnitt, how long will it be before they ask questions about Mr. Hardware?'

Lying on the grass as I was in that still hot summer air, do you know, when I heard that name, I felt as if I had caught a whiff of wind from off an iceberg!

'What do you mean by not careful?'

The harsh voice was somewhat subdued now.

'Don't be angry if I tell you,' she answered. 'Either don't ask me at all, or hear me speak. Sometimes after supper Joseph Barnitt sings very loud; and he swears, if he is out of temper; and he forgets what at other times he knows is matter of life and death. And—now, father, *don't* be angry!'

It was nothing short of awful to hear his language. Oath after oath, all directed at her, and charged with fury.

'Tell you what,' he growled, 'I have my suspicions about you.'

I don't care for this kind of talk about Joseph Barnitt and *Mr. Hardware*—with a furious emphasis on 'Mr.' 'Why can't you speak plainly? O, turning pale are we? Are you hiding anything from me? Let's look at your face.'

I suppose during the silence he searched her with his eyes. He soon spoke again, and in a less uneasy tone.

'No; you wouldn't dare. You know Joseph Barnitt too well.'

And at the name 'Joseph Barnitt,' he too broke into a hoarse laugh, full like her own of mingled hatred and fear.

'You know what the cold muzzle of a revolver feels like put right against the temple. You know what the sharp point of a knife feels like held against the breast.'

She said nothing.

'Joseph Barnitt'—that horrid laugh again!—'has schooled you well. No; we need not be afraid. You are too careful of your delicate skin. But let me tell you, my moping lady, when Joseph Barnitt cannot look after you, old Mr. Hardware can. There is life in the old dog yet.'

'But, father—' she began.

All along the voice had sounded strangely familiar. Of course; it was *Vanity Hardware*.

'No more of it!' he cried fiercely. 'What I have said, I have said. Let us go home.'

The voices ceased, but for some little time I did not venture to move. When at last I peeped through the hedge, I saw old *Hardware* hobbling across the field with his daughter at his side. A footpath ran through the meadow, and two men were walking towards the spot where the pair had been sitting; perhaps the appearance of these strangers made the old gentleman

hurry away. I say hurry, for he was making as much haste as possible in a rheumatic subject like himself. The latter part of the conversation had left me in no doubt as to who the speakers were; but when my eyes corroborated my ears, and assured me that *Miss Vanity* and her father had indeed been engaged in this dialogue, I felt amazed again. Things seen, somebody says, are stronger than things heard. I looked after them for a long time, lost in wonder.

When I came to myself, the first thought that crossed my mind was—'How fortunate for Willie that I came here this afternoon!' As to playing the spy or the eavesdropper, no man despises such conduct more heartily than I; but in this case I could not regret an accident which seemed to me providentially ordered for the welfare of the lad.

'Who this Joseph Barnitt can be is a puzzle,' thought I. 'Not her husband, I should say—certainly not her husband. He and the old man are in a hand: when one does not look after her, the other will! She wants looking after, I daresay. And so, ma'am'—I was thinking of *Miss Axford* now—'you were wrong after all. The gin was not for the old man. But what a puzzle the whole thing is!'

Thus, full of broken muttered thoughts, I worked my way downhill.

'One thing is clear,' said I, coming to this resolution just as I set foot in *Hampton Street*. 'Willie must know all this. The woman is no fit wife for him. She may be good, bad, or indifferent: I say *bad*: but, anyhow, no fit wife for him. And he shall hear me say so with reasons before the clock strikes nine.'

Accordingly, when we met, I

told Willie that I had news for him. He guessed it concerned Miss Vanity, and closed up like an oyster; and throughout the conversation maintained a guarded demeanour, saying little, and that cautiously. Still, my story made an impression on him, as his blanched cheeks plainly showed.

'Depend upon it,' said I, summing my story up, 'this is a black secret—a black secret, Will.'

'The Hardwares have something to conceal,' he replied pettishly. 'Some family disgrace, debt, a drunken son.'

'The talk of these two did not square with debt,' said I. 'Nor with drunken sons either.'

'O, of course,' said Will, still in his pettish way. 'Nothing will satisfy you, doctor, until you get a peep into every room in Tumbledown Farm house, and know the family history for three generations.'

'I would be best satisfied,' said I gravely, 'never to hear the name of Hardware again—never to see the false face of that baggage.'

We sparred on for an hour or more, barely keeping on the outside of a quarrel, but I could not induce Willie to promise that he would break off the connection. He would think of it.

'One question more I shall ask you,' said I, 'and this shall be the last. Do you think the affair looks promising? I don't deny that this girl *may* be respectable, but how do things look? Answer fairly, Will.'

'Appearances go for nothing,' replied Willie, 'nine times out of ten.'

He was beyond argument, and I said no more. Except that, wishing to part friends, I added,

'The worst I wish is, Will, that I may be wrong—and you right, my lad.'

'Thank you, doctor,' cried

Willie, kind and frank as ever, and taking my hand in his. 'I shall remember all you have said, and be prudent. Only do me this kindness: never breathe a syllable about Miss Hardware and her father, and this odd conversation.'

'Well, you see, Will—I began in this way, and he caught me up.'

'If you promise to keep all this secret, I shall promise to take no decisive steps without consulting you.'

'Is that the bargain, Will?'

'It is, doctor, my bargain, if you make it yours.'

'Bargain's struck, then.'

And we shook hands and parted.

## CHAPTER X.

### ALL FOR HER.

'O, too convincing, dangerously dear  
In woman's eye—the unanswerable tear  
That weapon of her weakness she can  
wield  
To save, subdue—at once her spear and  
shield.  
Avoid it; virtue ebbs and wisdom errs  
Too fondly gazing on that grief of hero.  
What lost a world, and made a hero fly?  
The timid tear in Cleopatra's eye.'

BYRON.

A MORNING or two later a letter came to Willie Snow addressed in a woman's writing. The hand was strange, and Willie's mind was full of his sweetheart, so before he opened the envelope his thoughts flew off to her. With trembling fingers he drew forth a little pink sheet, which emitted a whiff of frangipanni: he saw that the writing was genteel; and then read the short sweet note.

'If you like to meet me this evening, one hour earlier than usual, you may. Of course, this is private. Don't come unless you really wish.—Yours, S. H.'

'P.S.—You had better come in any case, but you need not stay.'

Poor Willie had no head for business that day. His brain was swarming with a multitude of delightful ideas; but still in the few calmer intervals that relieved his excitement he pondered what I had told him. It was of the essence of Will's character not to suspect any one he loved. Of Vanity he could think no evil. Assuring himself, however, that she must be in some extraordinary position, he resolved to be cautious.

'For her sake,' thought Willie, 'just as much for my own.'

His foolish heart beat high as he repeated, I suppose for the hundredth time, that his might be the hand which would extricate beautiful Vanity from this unknown difficulty, which he persisted in believing was not dishonourable. And so, full of hopes and dreams, he walked up to their meeting-place.

To Willie this interview was of supreme importance, and his mind was on edge with expectation. Vanity stood waiting at the gate as usual, and he remarked that she was dressed with particular care, and, so far as attire went, looked her best. They shook hands nervously. Willie, in dread of the opening of the conversation, had prepared a question beforehand which he now put with an air of gaiety.

'Why does Miss Vanity Hardware sign her notes S. H.?'

'Because Miss Vanity is not Miss Vanity; Miss Vanity is Miss Susan.' This odd answer she made pretty and witty with her airs.

'Then,' said Willie, 'why did she ever get such a name?'

'Well, you see,' replied Susan Hardware, 'she was so good, sir, and so demure, and so unconscious of her own merits, and blushed so, sir, when spoken to,

that at first they called her Miss Modesty.'

'Ah,' said Willie, 'that *was* a pretty name!'

'Quite so, sir. But, as time went on, the young thing grew up, and changed for the worse, and liked pretty gowns and Paris gloves and ribbons, and she looked people straight in the face; then they called her Vanity.'

All this was said with an air of frivolity, and yet she did not seem in a light mood after all: more as if she were used to jest even when sick at heart.

'And who,' asked Willie, 'gave you all these names?'

'O, my godfathers and godmothers. Such nice respectable people.'

'Seriously,' Willie said, 'who called you Vanity?'

Here the young woman, mindful of the double or treble part which it suited her scheme to play, gathered her face into a look of sorrow and scorn.

'People who knew the meaning of evil names. Give me a new name, Willie.'

Swing! from rakish jest to tearful earnestness in a second. Am I not right? Actress—actress from her false cheek to her heart's core! Of course I tell the tale as it was told to me, and write down gravely, 'melting voice,' 'humid eyes,' and all the rest of it. Do I believe she felt it? Do I believe in Mr. Punch's fatherly love when he is rocking his baby to sleep? No. I repeat, the woman was an actress; and actress is that actress does.

She repeated in the sweetest tone,

'Give me a new name, Willie.'

And the lad's head went the way his heart had gone.

'What shall I call you? Beauty, Love, Truth? Anything bright, anything good!'

She smiled, then put the matter aside, and spoke seriously.

'I sent for you because I have a great deal to say. I have been thinking over our last conversation. Can you stay a long time this evening?'

Of course her time was his; at which she nodded her satisfaction. Then, resting her arm on the gate, she began, in the same earnest self-collected voice,

'Do you really love me?'

'I do,' Willie replied, not making any protestation, but speaking with a seriousness like her own.

'Why do you love me? You know nothing about me.'

'Your beauty made me.'

'No other reason—only my beauty?'

'Your beauty made me love yourself. I love *you* now, not it.'

'Do you really believe,' she went on, with a composure that signified careful thought, 'that you love me enough to marry me, and live with me all your life long?'

'I do,' Willie said, as a man says 'I will' in the marriage service.

'And you consider me the woman that would make you happiest?'

'Happier!' Willie answered, with a deep expressive sigh—'happier than tongue can tell.'

'Take me, Willie,' she said. 'I am yours; yours this hour and evermore.'

She looked grand in her loveliness. Resolution was in her face, where every feature seemed compact with the intensity of a great purpose. Inspiration shone in her eyes, as if the light of a noble future were reflected there. Force of character was expressed in the ring of her voice. A queen! a queen! she seemed to stand beside him, a docile amiable youth.

'O Vanity!' he cried, in an

almost girlish ecstasy, 'how happy you have made me!' He tried to take her hand, but—

'Don't,' she said, putting him back. 'We are not making love. We are talking about something that will affect our whole lives. When this is settled, make love if you like.' She slid one glance of momentary playfulness at him. 'Willie,' she continued, resuming her gravity, 'I will change the whole course of my life for you. True, it will be no great sacrifice,' she shook her head—'but, be the sacrifice great or little, I make it. Can you do so much for me? Can you give up your country, and all your prospects in England, all for me?'

'If necessary, I can; but will that be needed?' The lad spoke with his own frank-spirited air.

'Judge for yourself. Now, I shall know whether you love me from your heart or not.'

That she threw a spell over Willie was certain. Are there, I wonder, people born with a power of drawing others to themselves—not everybody or anybody, but particular persons—having some inborn peculiarity which attracts certain elect spirits? Willie was cool enough with other girls. No doubt other young men would have been cool enough with Vanity. Just as you may draw a magnet over a heap of copper parings without moving them, while a chip of steel will obey its own nature and fly up instantly, Vanity had a kind of magnetic influence over her lover.

'First,' she said, 'you must put your whole trust in me. There must be no reserve. At once and for ever you must believe that I am all a woman ought to be. As you think me, such shall I be.' She spoke like one who saw the future rolled out before her clearly. Far-fetched her words might seem,



but she uttered them with matter-of-fact precision. They were words weighed beforehand, not thrown off in excitement. Well might Willie listen in wonder. 'Will you turn back now?' she asked. 'Do you wish to unsay what you have said? You are still free.'

'No,' Willie said; 'let me be bound to you.'

'There is something more,' she continued. 'You have a good position in this place, and fine prospects. Can you throw up all for my sake?' He started at this. 'If we marry, we must leave England. You must begin life in America or one of the Colonies. You will have to break with all your friends, and come away—*with me only.*'

Freely she threw difficulties in his way; but her words 'with me only' were uttered with designed sweetness—a hint that she would repay him all he sacrificed. Now, in the face of this new condition, Willie somewhat hesitated; but his hesitation rather increased the force of what he said when at last he spoke.

'I can give up home and country and prospects for you,' he said, 'but may I not know why?'

'Not now. Not until all has been done,' she replied. 'Remember, Willie, you ask me to marry you. I tell you what our marriage will involve. If you ask me to explain myself, I cannot explain. But see, you can go your way, and I shall go mine.' He said nothing. 'More than this,' she said, regarding him with a resolute and searching look, 'you must keep the fact of our engagement—if we become engaged—a profound secret. No one—not your nearest friend—must know why you are leaving England. We must be married privately, and we must leave England that day.'

'But, Vanity—' he said.

'Speak on,' she cried. 'Now is the time to speak. Say whatever is in your mind.'

'Your father—are you going to leave him?'

'I am.'

'Secretly?'

'Yes.'

For a moment both were silent. Then Vanity spoke,

'If he knew—if he even suspected—that I had a thought of marrying—she stopped herself. Something she must not utter had risen to her lips.

'Have you no scruples about leaving him in this way?' Willie ventured to ask.

'None.'

She stood erect, haughty, inflexible, more beautiful than ever. She had stated her terms, and waited for his reply with an air almost defiant. And Willie was so different! Eager enough, it is true; full of affection, but somehow rather like a man whose strength of will depended on a source outside himself: who might suddenly fail in action if the supply of energy from without were cut off. For the present, however, the supply flowed freely. Vanity's collected air, and the calm way in which she had made her mysterious stipulations, gave her a new hold on Willie—the grasp of the firmer nature upon the weaker. She was, in his eyes, more than a beauty now. She was a clear-headed woman, capable of an extraordinary purpose; one who could conduct his life and her own to some successful and brilliant end.

'Should I be able to work my way in the Colonies?' he asked her, not thinking how quickly he had learned to look up to her and trust her judgment.

'You would be able,' she answered; 'meanwhile, you are not



without means of living. I can rough it. I shall enjoy roughing it, if you are with me.' Second tender touch! It was the more tender because otherwise her manner denoted determination rather than feeling.

Willie stood and pondered.

'I have just one word more,' continued Vanity. 'There must be no delay. If we marry, it must not be later than a month from this day.'

She had said her say. He still remained silent, trying to review the strange and disordered succession of thoughts that passed through his mind. Willie was one of those persons 'led by custom,' who like the beaten path of prudence and respectability. He took a proper pride in his reputation for good sense and civility. These requirements made by Vanity—sweeping away, as they did, the whole fabric of his past, detaching him from his friends and banishing him from his country—were not to be lightly granted. His situation in the ironworks was lucrative; besides which he was caressed and trusted by his employers. Besides being of a social and domestic habit, he disliked the idea of parting from companions and acquaintances. Every friendship he had seemed now to be another thread binding him to home; no single cord being very strong, perhaps, but all together formidable enough, like those Liliputian ropes which tied Mr. Gulliver down. He hesitated; and Vanity knew that he hesitated, and she turned her head away. Just at that moment of suspense a hidden bird in the grove began to sing; only a few notes, deep and rich, bubbling up as if Nature had an inarticulate language fuller of love than speech could be! A bar or two, then the snatch of melody

died away in the calm evening air.

Willie looked up. Vanity's face was a little turned aside while she gazed wistfully at the setting sun. She thought he had given her up, and he saw a quiet tear fall from her cheek into the grass. Her whole look and attitude were sad, and her sadness conquered him.

'Vanity, living or dying, I am yours for ever and ever!'

Actress—actress and silly, silly boy!

## CHAPTER XI.

### VANITY ASKS A HARD THING.

'Follow thou the star of Love!  
Though dark and wild may seem the  
night,  
And rocks and pits may break the way,  
Yet follow on, for soon his light  
Shall broaden into steadfast day.  
And so farewell, my friend—depart.  
Your mind untouched by shade of  
gloom,  
And follow Love with trusting heart,  
Ay, over the imminent edge of doom.'  
WADE ROBINSON, *Lochland*.

For more than an hour they talked in lovers' fashion, for, difficulties having been surmounted, Willie wished to enjoy himself. But amidst every tender speech Vanity betrayed an anxiety which she could not disguise.

'Will you trust me?' And when he vowed he would, her reply came with misgiving: 'Are you sure you will trust me?'

'As sure as that I live,' he answered again.

And her rejoinder was: 'It will kill me if you do not trust me.'

What she feared was that something would come out during the month. What she hoped was so to fascinate Will that, if anything came out, he would credit not his eyes nor his ears, but her only. The woman was a sorceress! Not only must she enslave his affec-

tions; his very reason must be captivated.

She began to allegorise with the lad. Cleverly enough, you observe, and as follows:

'There is a story in the *Arabian Nights*, Willie—a terrible story! Often I shuddered as I read it. You ought to hear it now, my boy.'

'Tell it me, then.'

'At the top of a rugged, stony mountain was a precious charm. Myriads of men had toiled up the enchanted mountain, trying to secure the prize. But by enchantment each had turned into a black stone; and there stood the fatal mountain, covered with black stones, in which were imprisoned the souls of those who had failed; and the prize was overhead, untouched by human hand. For as each competitor struggled up the rough way, he heard all sorts of voices crying at him from behind. Threatening voices! Taunting voices! Scolding voices! Tender voices! And one or other of the voices caused the toiler to turn his head; and when he turned his head, he fell by the wayside, a black and senseless stone.'

'What is this to me?' Willie asked.

'At last one went up the hill with brave, firm, resolute heart. Every voice called in vain. The summit was near. The voices grew louder, more dreadful, and more bewitching, but none availed. The climber never turned back; the prize was won, and the enchantment broken for ever.'

'Brave man,' said Willie.

'Ah, Willie, Willie! It was a woman who broke the spell: the men had not constancy. They thought of themselves. The voices spoke to their inmost wish and thought, and so they could not but hearken.'

'And how did the woman overcome?'

'Because she thought of the man she loved!'

'And why could not the voices allure her? Women's hearts are soft.'

'The voices only spoke to her, and of her, threatening her, beseeching her. Had the enchanters known her heart—had one voice but put on the tones of the man she loved, and called out, as if in anguish, "Come back—come back to me!" she, too, had failed, and turned to stone.'

She paused, and then, like a sad refrain, came the old words:

'Trust me, Willie—trust me, whatever the cruel voices say!'

'Trust you?' exclaimed Willie, almost impatiently; 'why, to love is to trust.'

'But do you love me? Truly? I am not sure. If you go on trusting me, you must face all sorts of dark doubts about my character. If you fly to me and say, "Explain," my reply will be, "I cannot explain." What then, Willie?'

'I will trust you.'

'It must be trust that is more than trust. In me, thus surrounded with doubts—horrid doubts—you, my poor boy, must put a faith such as few men would put in the most tried friend. Questions may be asked concerning me which, were they asked concerning a loved and loyal wife, might drive a brave husband to frenzy. What then, Willie?'

Willie's eyes were set on the ground. He hesitated. But when he looked up into her face he became like one in a trance, and replied,

'I will trust you still.'

A sort of natural eloquence, springing from her own excitement, now made her speech more impressive than ever.

'Willie, you must let me blind-

fold you, and guide you whither I will. And while I lead you along the unseen way, voices will cry, "Madman! Imbecile! Tear the bandage from your eyes. Look what woman leads you! Look to what a precipice her false and cruel hand is guiding your steps!" What then, Willie?

What then? Why, the mechanical response of a man whose sense and reason were in captivity. And, after Cleopatra and Antony, who blames my inexperienced lad?

'You shall blindfold me! You shall guide me!'

'If you listen to the voices—if you lose faith in me—our love dies in an hour. Nay more, I may turn out all they would have you believe I am. But if you trust me blindly—trust me fully—at last I shall open your eyes, and you shall see—'

In the full stream of her impetuous utterance, she stopped suddenly.

Then the wondering boy asked,

'What shall I see?'

'A woman you have rescued from infamy and agony!' And as she said this she broke out in a passion of weeping.

Afterwards she grew more tranquil, and still they talked. The saffron of the sunset had died off the west, and the stars were shining. Willie felt happy now in spite of his sacrifice. Vanity had been speaking freely, delighting him with her freshness, her simplicity, and a curious mixture of childish pleasure and womanly good sense. Willie could not but wonder that she, free and familiar with strangers, was so modest, so artless, with her affianced husband. She grew shy just when other women would have cast their shyness aside. This, of course, was her artfulness, but how could he understand that!

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At last they must say good-bye. Everything had been arranged: how Willie should leave his home and situation; the time and place of their marriage. They were to meet that night four weeks at the same hour and fly together. Willie asked Vanity no further questions about her position or its exigencies. One day, she said, she would explain all.

'And until we meet, you will think no evil of me?'

'None,' he cried fervently.

'If the proof seems clear as the noonday sun?'

'I will shut my eyes.'

'Remember the enchanted mountain, Willie—and the voices—and the fate of those who looked back.'

'I will not forget.'

Then for an instant the vision changed. The menacing, resolute woman, imperious in her beauty, vanished: love trembled on Vanity's parted lips, and she assumed an air of most languishing softness.

*'Remember the prize on the summit of the difficult hill.'*

A dying look—a playful look—a coquettish look—which was it she gave?

He could not tell, so quickly had she flown away.

## CHAPTER XII.

MISS AND I TALK THINGS OVER.

THERE I stopped again.

'Miss,' said I, 'how do you like Willie by this time?'

'Better.'

'It is quite plain, miss, that the lad is doing his best to carry on things respectably.'

'I suppose so.' This she said in her dry way, lifting her pretty eyebrows after her fashion. Then

oo

she added, 'I was not thinking of his respectability.'

'No?' said I. 'But, miss'—what follows I said being determined to bring her to the point—'you do like a respectable young man, don't you?'

'O, of course, doctor! Every woman likes a respectable young man. But what pleases me in Willie is that he begins to behave like a lover, and show courage.'

'Being determined meanwhile, miss'—this I would maintain—'to carry on things respectably.'

She did not notice what I said.

'No woman cares for a man who has to be urged by her from step to step. As if a knight were to be pricked on to combat by a lady's needle.'

Here I found nothing to say.

'The woman looks for bravery in the man,' young miss continued. 'She is brave when he is brave, dares what he dares, follows where he leads, and she will not fear death itself if he will die with her.'

I was going to say something about respectability again, but somehow did not see where it would come in.

'Look at riders in the field!' she cried, with glowing cheeks and eyes. 'One goes over the earth like a master of men, comes to a five-barred gate, takes it flying, and careers away again like lightning. There rides the man for me!'

Do you know, it was fine to hear and watch her.

'A second horseman comes up to the gate—pulls up, looks at it, dismounts, opens the gate, sneaks through, and ambles over the next field. Many such a man as that!'

'And a third rider, miss,' says I, 'rides up to the gate, puffing

and panting, makes his horse nervous, takes the gate all but the top bar, and over horse and rider go tumbling; and my gentleman breaks his collar-bone, or gets up with a matter of seven or eight pounds of mud on his coat.'

There she laughed outright.

'And now, miss,' said I, changing the subject, 'what shall we say of Miss Vanity?'

'Poor Vanity!'

'I found a little book of hers—a sort of diary. How it came into my hands you will understand as the tale proceeds. A book black and burnt, for it passed through raging flames. But in that book I read the woman's art and cunning and deceit. It is plain to me that she wrote the diary with the deliberate intention of letting it fall into her lover's hands—accidentally or on purpose, you observe. Miss Vanity's confessions were written to lead Willie to believe that she was a good woman—in a fix, mark you. Of course, she must put in all kinds of dark hints and fine protestations, such as play-actors use. But nothing could serve her ends so well as a diary, in which, while apparently communing with her own heart, as King David says, she might all the time be spinning her web round the unsuspecting lad.'

'But may she not have been writing for herself after all, doctor?'

'Why, miss, when the spider sang, "Will you walk into my parlour?" it might have been out of pure lightness of heart, and because he was naturally fond of music. He *might* not have been thinking of the fly at all.'

'Did the fly walk into the parlour, doctor?'

'That, miss,' said I, 'would be telling. Now for Vanity's diary.'

(To be continued.)

## WHAT I OWE THE SNAKES.

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ALTHOUGH mankind assumes 'sceptre and power' over the lower ranks of creation, and, on the whole, manages to get his own way, and have his authority recognised among them, still it is astonishing how often the tables are turned, and what power even the smallest creatures possess of intimidating their lords.

Men who are absolutely fearless of danger, who have proved this by braving perils on sea and land, and men who on the battle-field do most resemble Wordsworth's 'Happy Warrior,' will yet find themselves shuddering at the sight of a bright-eyed mouse in the old barn at home, or at a garden spider among the roses.

This trepidation has nothing to do with a 'fearful heart and faint hands.' Nor can it be called cowardice when a woman who is calm and strong in emergency feels upset by a cat, screams at blackbeetles, &c., and even, though the case is rare, gets scared if a dog comes near.

Dear dog, charming domestic cat, persevering spider, and other interesting insect tribes, ye may house with me, but O! the snake, the loathly snake, with its heavy coils of flesh, its terrible manner of approach—writhing so noiselessly along, maybe under one's very feet, in the twilight, and, when crossed in its intentions, turning with utmost spite and rancour on the passer-by. I own to the greatest horror of these reptiles, whether dangerous or not, and I have met with too many by half in my travels, some harmless, some deadly-fanged

cobras, ring necks, snake-eating snakes, mambas, and, most disgusting of all, puff-adders. Difference in their natures made none in my sentiments; the guileless made my hair stand on end equally with the virulent ones. Even now, seated in my comfortable library, in an atmosphere of fog that would strike any snake as truly grievous, I feel absurdly ill at ease, as memory paints the reptile in its sunny lands gliding about to enjoy, like myself, the summer heat, or, like myself, imbibing with delight the water of some sparkling stream.

Only the amiable hope that I may convey a similar thrill to some of my readers prevents my throwing aside the objectionable subject.

Some few years ago work was cut out for me which took me 8000 miles or so from England, into the heart of a country not unknown to fame—a country that might have rivalled India as a jewel in our sovereign's crown if men of the Lawrence type, or men like Nicholson, Montgomery, or any of the Punjab heroes, had in wisdom been sent to guide her in late momentous years—a country whose glory has departed.

My pen is not of fire that it should write of great hopes unrealised, of noble lives 'accounted madness' by the short-sighted world, of heartrending *might have beens* in that sunny but unhappy land; its humble task is simply to follow the track of snakes in the dust.

I was engaged in surveying a wild district of the country I

have referred to above, when my first introduction to the genus snake took place. It was in mid-summer, a splendid time for a lover of heat and light; I longed to be able to share it with friends who were alternately enduring sunlit east wind days and snowy sunless ones at home.

My tent was for some time pitched at the head of a waterfall that splashed and leapt from stone to stone, according to the joyous habit of its kind, forming clear pools amid maidenhair ferns and groups of many little unknown plants and brilliant flowers at the bottom of the ravine.

The sound of this laughing water was welcome after a day's work in the heat, and sweet was the waking to its murmur at dawn. The water was always cool for my bath when the hills above the encampment had just caught the rising sun, and the tall grasses hung heavy with dew, waiting with bowed heads for their hour of sunrise. And then birds began their morning song; wild deer, having grown to think no harm of me, ate grass at a short distance off from this strange being who neither sang nor nibbled, but only washed. I rejoiced that I was a true Londoner, and that no passion for field sports rendered me incapable of passing among the gentle creatures, and leaving them uninjured in their haunts.

One morning, as I strolled down the rough hill, towel in hand as usual, I noticed with a smile that my steps had begun to wear a track to Arethusa's shrine, and so when work would be over for ever for me in this secluded valley, sheltered and unknown, I should still leave my mark there.

I was walking on with a mind full of day-dreams when suddenly dreams, smiles, and contentment vanished at a blow, for, fronting

me at the foot of the descent, was a large thick-bodied snake.

Folds of him lay coiled upon the ground, and rising from them to about the height of my knee, he stood erect, ghastly, waving slightly to and fro, setting at me, and spitting venom in the hope of blinding me. The horror of this evil vision fell upon me. I could do nothing in self-defence but start back up the hill, and away from it.

When at last I turned and looked timorously down the ravine, I saw a shining steely thing, an image of blue death, curving its way through the translucent water of my pool. I leave readers to conjecture how often after this incident I visited this crystal stream.

It is but fair to snakes to state that, though I have often been scared by them, they have now and then amused and interested me. To give an instance in their favour: One day I was sitting with a friend in his verandah, when a chattering, hissing mass fell from the thatch roof down to the broad path, so necessary round a dwelling in lands where grass fires are frequent, and would, but for this precaution, be likely to come roaring for admittance at the threshold. Well; this roll of living matter fell, and natural antipathy running through my nervous system like an electric current warned me that a snake, though undistinguishable, was in this bundle; and, surely, soon a brown one uncoiled itself and went across the path, much impeded by two valiant little birds, who must have caught him poaching in their nest and turned him out. Now they were seeing him safe off the premises, and on his way into the thick refuge of grass, for which he was hurrying against adverse circumstances. The birds



were giving him a piece of their minds in aggravated twitter-language. He could not stand and give fight, for the moment he looked right an angry beak nipped his left side; on turning to the left he received a peck on his smooth rippling skin from the infuriated parent to the right. On and on went the party, the brave birds worrying the snake until the grass was reached, and then they left him.

My friend ought to have killed that reptile—I have never attempted to lay a finger on any of the race—but he was so taken up with this page of natural history that duty was neglected, and doubtless by this time snaky has reared a numerous and cold-blooded progeny.

After witnessing the play of the victorious birds, my friend had much to say on snakes, and poured tale after tale into my ears, unaware that I was sometimes quite rigid from nervous terror, and was involuntarily clutching the arm of my chair convulsively as I listened. Judging from his tales, the house must teem with serpent life: snakes had been found in all the bedrooms, in the sitting-rooms and verandah, one under the very chair to which I was clinging. Eighty had been killed near the house during the previous summer, some among his boots, others among his papers; one was dished up in the fresh grass cut for his unsuspicious cows, one had he found on his wife's foot, several in the nursery. The foundations of that house were well adapted for snakes: their domestic quiet could easily be secured in the stone-work and beneath the planks; what spot, in fact, within its walls and beneath its thatch would not form pleasant accommodation for these creatures!

I had fully decided in my own

mind to be off next day, when my host began a tale that riveted my attention and carried off my thoughts from the great centre-piece of self.

'For some time after we settled out here,' he said, 'my wife's youngest sister lived with us. She was a bright, clever, charming girl, liked the free life here, was a good deal in the saddle, and yet got through plenty of the trivial round and common task every day.

'She was tolerably happy with us; yes, I do believe that Alice would have enjoyed life out here if it had not been for the snakes; but she never could overcome her repulsion towards them. Very singular, was it not?

'O, most singular!' I stammered, thinking to myself that this girl must be very sensible and very like me.

'Fear, she asserted, had nothing to do with the matter; the bad characters were no more distressing than the harmless.' ('That girl is my other self,' thought I), 'and she was ready to meet Azrael himself any hour, any day, so long as he did not come in snake-skin. That question of fear, and whether deadliness has anything to do with inducing horror of snakes, is one I cannot answer, for they do not affect me; I have held them in my hand, and especially admire the green adder's splendid ruby eyes.'

Ugh!

'I have fallen asleep in the open, and been roused by finding a puff-adder moving slowly across my chest. I didn't interfere, and he soon left me. Now, a nervous man would have jumped sky-high, and the adder, mistaking fear for valour, would have dealt that backward stroke of the tongue with which he attacks, and ten to one he would have gone home with the beast hanging on to his neck,

for it is said that the puff-adder has in his fangs an extra hook (like the catch of a fishing-hook), which prevents their easy withdrawal.

'However, it appears to me that the shadow of death has something to do with the snake delirium that possesses people, a folly incomprehensible to you and me.

'Soldiers, seamen, hardy workmen, and reckless enthusiasts of all kinds meet death valiantly when the heart's blood is up, but I defy any one of them, and any one, howsoever weary of the world and heaven-sick (in the *heimweh* sense), not to be startled when death comes up suddenly before him in easy, quiet, unstrung moments. To return to Alice: her room was on the other side of the house—in fact, it was the very one you are in now. As she was sitting there at work one morning, there was a queer noise in the passage; it was a rolling and pawing sound, a heavy movement of some kind that she could not understand. It might be that my old retriever had come to lie at her door as was his custom, but why make these uncanny noises? He was generally so quiet.

'She whistled, but no attention was paid. She opened her door, then heard a tremendous hissing, and saw her cat standing about a yard from a snake that showed every sign of rage and evil intentions towards her. Always, I had cautioned Alice, always avoid a snake that stands up to attack; and this one was raised high from the ground, and was altogether frightful.

'Alice called off her faithful cat, and she and it both came to me at the rate of a hunt. I took my gun and went to the passage, but the beast had made off—there was nothing but the saliva it had ejected to show where the meeting

had taken place. There was a hole just above the boarding which may have been the snake's front door; there was another in Alice's room which may have been his back door. I filled both holes up, and thought no more of the affair.

'Poor Alice!' (How the man sighed! was it possible this interesting girl was no more?) 'Poor Alice! With her it was different. I had never seen her so beaten before by anything as by what she termed her encounter with the snake. She grew pale and nervous—started if the goose hissed, jumped up if one of the animals touched her feet. It was a wretched time, though she tried to laugh the matter off, and said it was best the snake should have got away.

"For now the whole family are under the impression that I came to the rescue of that member of it which puss showed me, out on a spree in the morning sun. I came, called puss off, and let this child of darkness wriggle home. Had I killed it, snakes would have come in dozens to avenge its death. The same principle holds with snakes as with men, and revenge is sweet to all."

'We besought Alice to move into another room, but she would not. She liked the room, was quite fond of it, you know; and you must allow that it is a nice one, eh? There is a pleasant view from it over the jewelled hills, with their wonderful colouring; the old mountain too shows well from her window, whether a cloud is on its brow, or the rich sandstone is glowing in afternoon sunshine, as though it were on fire within.

'Then her roses and honeysuckle, her tuberose and datura, and a hundred sweet flowers, scented the room beautifully; and it is not much wonder that the

girl liked it. She was rather wayward—self-willed, some would have said; and so it came about that she and puss remained in the haunted chamber.

'It used to amuse her to notice how the latter conducted herself in memory of the snake. She would look carefully round before coming in, and then proceed in a succession of jumps, eluding touch of the floor as much as possible, until safety was secured on a table or chair.

'That was a truly illustrious cat! Her history is well worth hearing; but I'm no cat-fancier, and might spoil it in the telling.' (It was a strange presentiment, reader, by which I felt certain that this eminent cat's history would some day be told me by an appreciative biographer.) 'Well,' continued my friend, 'I rode off one day with my wife to see some friends at a good distance, leaving Alice to look after everything.

'We had a wearisome ride in the heat, the friends were out, and there was nothing for it but to drag ourselves home again, in a desert wind, too, that had sprung up at midday. It is a mistake, however, to speak of that hot wind as springing up, for there's no vivacity in it; it is heavy as lead, and burning as a furnace blast; and through this we toiled, supported only by the knowledge that everything would be ready for us at home. Alice was the queen of housekeepers, for a wild country: leave her in charge, and have no fear of returning to discomfort. The kettle was certain to be boiling for tea, the boiler ready for baths, and if there happened to be any refreshment that seemed absolutely necessary to the pleasure of life at the moment, that refreshment was sure to be found on the table.

'Such being our views with re-

gard to Alice, imagine our feelings on finding nothing ready for us—no welcome awaiting us, as usual, from our bright genial sister.

'In silence we dismounted, and, sadly wondering, entered the house. The only sign of necessary care was that the shutters were closed against the hot wind. 'At last I heard a suppressed sound of voices in the direction of Alice's room. We hastened towards it, and, to our dismay, found the poor girl lying insensible on the door-mat. Two of the servants were kneeling by her with stimulants; at her feet sat puss, looking very sick; a short distance off lay a large snake, quite dead.

'The servants had heard a noise, a scream, a fall, and, hastening over to the passage, had found the snake wounded and fierce, the cat keeping it at bay, and an iron weight which Alice must have heaved at the enemy lying near.

'We raised her to the bed, and there she lay a long time unconscious. I, meanwhile, treated her as best I might for snake-bite, but, mark you, no one knew whether she had been bitten or not. By a lucky chance the eau de luce I had given my wife to hold went off in her hand, and flew all about, half suffocating us, but reviving the patient. She started up, looked pitifully at puss, and sank back again, but not into unconsciousness. Presently she pointed to her right foot, where it seemed that she thought she had been stung, but no trace whatever could be found.

'Puss sat crouching by her mistress with closed eyes, and we ascertained that venom had been thrown into them; otherwise she was all right, and she recovered before very long. After examination, my wife and I decided that

Alice could not have been stung, but the poor child insisted on it that she had so suffered to the very last. Nay, do not start and look aghast! I did not mean by that to imply that she died; die she did not, but fell into a miserably low state of health, and gave in so completely to an outrageous dread of snakes that, after a long time of indecision, we resolved, in full family conclave, that she must quit this semi-tropical country.

'It was too bad to be turned out of a happy home by snakes, was it not?'

'I trust that she found another happy home elsewhere,' I said, much interested.

'Only tolerably so,' said my friend, meditatively refilling his pipe.

'Only tolerably so? I should have hoped your sister would be supremely happy, for, by your account, she deserved to be so.'

'Ah, well—maybe; and perhaps Alice will one day meet with her deserts.'

'There's nothing wrong. I trust? I hope that he—' said I, with uncalled-for anxiety of mind.

My host interrupted me with a short laugh. 'O, there's no *he* in the question; the girl lives with her aunt in one of the midland counties. A fine place; and, I say, if you are really going home this

year, I should like to send seeds of some African flowers by you. There are varieties that would astonish the old folks at home.'

'I will gladly be your messenger. It will give me the greatest pleasure to make acquaintance with one who holds my own views regarding snakes.'

'Nonsense!' said my friend. 'On my word, I never dreamt that you were a snake-hater. I thought you rather patronised them; and you have well borne out the character I gave you. You must have had an uncomfortable time during my narrations.'

'All's well, sir, that ends well,' I answered dreamily.

I left the country a few months later, and came in for two midsummers that year.

Beyond measure the sweetest and most beautiful and best was that spent on the English side of the water, for here I plucked a flower that does not fade nor wither.

Better than all the wondrous rich and pure-scented flowers of the south is my love-blossom, the English rose—my Alice; and we two have vowed a vow to try and think kindly of those dreadful disgusting monsters the snakes, because by means of them we were first introduced to each other—and to bliss.

K. GILES.

## A FADED LEAF.

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I CAN hardly believe it even now. If there was one person in this world whom I should have thought safe from the remotest chance of matrimony, that person was aunt Hetty—dear, placid, middle-aged aunt Hetty. And yet I have just seen her drive away from the door hand-in-hand with her handsome husband, and looking as sweet and bonny as any young bride of nineteen, notwithstanding her silver hair. It has all happened so quickly, and in such a wonderful fairy-tale kind of fashion, that I feel as if it had taken my breath away, and as if I must really sit down and rest a bit, and think the matter over.

I have lived with aunt Hetty ever since mother died. When I came to her I was quite a little tot, and now I am six-and-twenty, so you may imagine it is a good many years ago. Auntie must have been a young woman then; but somehow she has always seemed middle-aged to me. She was always so calm and gentle, and did everything in such a quiet business-like way, that I regarded her as a different kind of being from my restless excitable self. I have had my little flirtations now and then; but aunt Hetty seemed too grave, too wise, too good altogether, ever to have been mixed up in anything so frivolous as a love affair. It only shows how we may live with people in the same house, almost in the same room, for years together, and yet know little or nothing of their inmost feelings. I remember, almost as if it were yesterday, fancying one day,

about a year ago, that auntie was dressed more carefully than usual. I don't know what the difference was—only an extra bit of lace or ribbon, or something of that sort; but I said to her in fun,

'Why, auntie dear, how smart you are! One would think you were going to a wedding!'

'No, dear,' she said, 'I am not going to a wedding, but this should have been my own silver-wedding day.' And the dear lip quivered for a moment, and a tear came into the soft gray eyes.

'Your silver wedding, auntie! Forgive me; I didn't know—'

'No, dear,' she said; 'of course you could not. It is a very old story now.'

'But how was it, then, that you were not married after all, auntie?' I inquired. 'But perhaps I ought not to ask. Don't tell me, if it pains you.'

'No, dear,' she said; 'it was a painful story once, but the pain has gone out of it now. And I think I should like to tell it to you. Perhaps some day it may save you from making such a mistake as I did. It is a very simple story—just a lovers' quarrel, a few hasty words—all said and over in five minutes; but they altered my whole life.'

'A lovers' quarrel, auntie! Then I am sure the fault was not on your side!'

'You are wrong, dear. The fault *was* on my side. I was proud, and angry, and obstinate; a word would have given me back my lover, but I would not say it. We parted in anger, and we have never met again!'

'You, auntie!—the most patient of living beings—you proud, and angry, and obstinate! I can't believe it!'

'Yes, Ruth; it is true, nevertheless. Sit here on the hassock at my feet, and I will tell you my story. It won't take long.'

I sat down accordingly, and with her hand resting on my shoulder, and now and then wandering lovingly over my hair, she began:

'It happened when I was only eighteen—younger than you, Ruth, and full of life and spirit—very different from the faded old maid you have always known me. I was engaged to be married. My lover was four years older than myself; he was a mate of a ship, and a fine dashing young fellow, named Edward Blake. We had been engaged six months, and were to be married a month later. The day was fixed, and Edward had arranged to give up the sea, and take a situation on-land. We were as happy as any two young people could possibly be; but, unluckily, just a month before the time fixed for our wedding-day, a picnic was got up by some of our friends, and Edward and I were of the party. There was a handsome young fellow there named Percy Sandys, the son of a neighbouring clergyman. He was fresh from college, and full of fun and frolic. I chanced to be placed next to him at luncheon, and not knowing, as I afterwards discovered, that I was engaged, he was specially attentive to me. I did not care for his attentions in the least; but I was in high spirits, and only bent on the enjoyment of the moment, and I did not check him as, perhaps, I ought to have done. Presently I caught sight of Edward's face, and saw that he was looking terribly cross and angry. Foolishly,

I thought it rather good fun to make him jealous, and, on purpose to tease him, I pretended to take all the more notice of Mr. Sandys. When we had finished luncheon, the party scattered, and strolled about the woods in various directions. I naturally expected Edward to accompany me, but he rather rudely, as I thought, held aloof, and, to punish him, I paired off with Mr. Sandys. When the party got together again, Edward looked so savage that I thought it better not to provoke him any further.

'I shook off Mr. Sandys, and, walking away with Edward, began to scold him for his unreasonable jealousy. Of course I did not think I myself was in fault; nobody ever does. A loving word would have made me penitent directly. Unfortunately, he was white-hot with anger, and began to reproach me in a way that roused my temper too; for I was quick enough to take offence in those days, Ruth, though I have learned better since. I can remember, as if it were yesterday, the nook in the woods where we stood, the sunshine glinting through the trees, and lighting up Edward's flushed face and angry eyes. He reproached me bitterly—more bitterly, I think, than I deserved. He called me a heartless coquette, and I called him little-minded, and told him he had made himself ridiculous by his unreasonable jealousy. We got hotter and hotter; and finally he declared that if I did not admit that I had been wrong, and promise to behave differently for the future, all must be over between us. I did not care a straw for Mr. Sandys, and would fifty times sooner have had Edward with me; but I would have died sooner than have told him so then. So I gave him a bitter



answer, and we both grew angrier still. His last words, uttered with all the intensity of passion, ring still in my ears. I can tell you them word for word: "Hetty, if you let me go now, understand clearly you will never see my face again." I did not quite believe him. Perhaps, if I had, I should still have let him go. At any rate, I was far too angry to give way then. "Go, by all means, if you wish it," I said; and in another moment he was gone. I had been tearing to pieces, in my passion, a little spray of hawthorn he had given me earlier in the day. I had pulled off the leaves one by one, and when he left me, the bare stem was left in my hand, with one leaf only remaining. See, here it is, the last relic of my first and last love. God grant that in your whole life, my Ruth, you may never weep such tears as I have wept over that one faded leaf.

Aunt Hetty took from her desk the little Prayer-book she always carried, a quaint little red-covered book, with a gilt clasp, and showed me just within it a tissue-paper pocket attached to the cover. This she opened, and showed me the faded leaf.

"This little book," she said, "was Edward's first gift to me; and this old dry leaf is my only relic of the day when we parted in anger in the wood, never to meet again in this world. Stay, I have one more treasure; see!"

She drew from her bosom a quaint old locket, and put it in my hand. It was a miniature painting, representing a young man in an old fashioned naval costume. It was a handsome face, but stern and proud-looking; and I could well believe that the original would have behaved as aunt Hetty had described.

"But did you really part like that, auntie?" I said. "Did you never see him again?"

"Never. He did not go back to the picnic-party, but joined an outward-bound ship the very next day, leaving a brief note for my mother, stating that we had fortunately found out in time that we were unsuited to each other, and had therefore by mutual consent put an end to our engagement."

"But that was very cruel, auntie?"

"I thought so then. Perhaps it was, a little; but afterwards I blamed myself far more than him. I had given the provocation; and I knew in my heart of hearts that one word of regret on my part would have made all right between us. But I was too proud to say it. I let him go, with my eyes open, and I have been justly punished."

"But have you never heard of him since, auntie?"

"Once or twice, in early years; but only indirectly. He had no relatives in our part of the country. I know that he gave up the sea, and obtained a commission in some Indian regiment. When last I heard of him he was a captain; but that is many years ago, and I do not know whether he is alive or dead. So ends my poor little romance. There is one thing I should like to ask, Ruth, and that is partly why I have told you my story. You have seen my relics. They have been my greatest treasures in life; and I should like them put in my coffin when I die. Will you remember this, dear?"

I could not answer for tears; but I kissed her hand, and she was content.

Two months ago, tired of our humdrum country life, auntie and

I resolved, for once, to visit foreign parts. Accordingly, we went to Boulogne, and took up our abode in a quiet boarding-house in the Rue des Vieillards. Our domicile was a quaint old house, said to have been originally a nunnery, and afterwards to have been occupied for a short time by the great Napoleon, when meditating a descent upon England. A broad gateway, flanked on either side by disused field-guns, planted upright in the ground by way of gate-posts, led into a pleasant courtyard, with seats under the shade of a spreading tree, and made musical by the plash of a modest fountain. There were a good many visitors staying in the house; but they were mostly in families or parties, and we did not amalgamate much with them. Our *vis-à-vis* at table was a tall elderly gentleman of soldierly appearance, who was always spoken of as the Major. He had evidently been a very handsome man—indeed, he was handsome still. His hair and moustache were perfectly white, forming a marked contrast with his complexion, which was extremely dark, as if tanned by long residence under a tropical sun. I think I was first attracted to him by noticing that his French was even worse than our own. When he ventured, as he occasionally did, to address an order to the white-capped waiting-maids in their own language, the difficulties he got into were dreadful, and he generally ended by getting rather angry with himself and them. Once or twice I ventured, very timidly, to help him out of a difficulty of this kind, and in this manner a slight acquaintance had sprung up between us. It had, however, proceeded no further than a friendly good-morning, or a casual remark across the

dinner-table. With other visitors the Major fraternised even less. After breakfast he regularly smoked one cigar under the tree in the courtyard; after which he started off for a solitary ramble, and did not reappear till dinner-time. So matters stood until the first Sunday evening after our arrival, when we went, as in duty bound, to the little English church in an adjoining street. We were ushered into one of the pews appropriated for strangers; and a minute or two later the Major was shown into the same pew, and sat down silently beside us. The service proceeded in the usual course, and the sermon was nearly over, when the Major, by an accidental movement of his elbow, knocked down auntie's little red Prayer-book, which was on the sloping ledge before her. He stooped to pick it up, and was about to replace it, but as it came in view in the full glare of the gaslight, his eye chanced to fall upon it, and he started as though he had seen a ghost. He laid down the book on the desk before him, but it seemed to fascinate him. He looked from the book to aunt Hetty, and from aunt Hetty to the book, as if trying to satisfy himself on some point, but without success. The sermon came to an end at last, and the benediction followed; but I fear the Major had little share in it. He took advantage of the moment when all heads were bowed to do a very unmannerly thing. He slyly put up his eyeglass, and, opening auntie's Prayer-book, took a rapid peep at the name inside. It was very quickly done, and might have escaped notice; but I was watching him closely. I could even read the name myself. It was in a bold manly handwriting. 'To Hester; June 28, 18—' I stared aghast at such

an act of impertinence, and glanced at aunt Hetty, to see whether she would resent it; but she had probably not noticed the offence, for she made no sign.

The congregation began to disperse, and we passed out in our turn, the Major close behind us. We were scarcely fairly in the street, when he spoke to auntie.

'Madam, I am going to ask you a very singular question; but let me assure you that I have a deep personal interest in asking it. Will you tell me how you came by that red Prayer-book that you use?'

I shall never forget auntie's answer, given as quietly as if it were the most commonplace matter, though I could tell by the faint rose-flush on her usually pale cheek how deeply she was moved.

'You gave it to me yourself, Major Blake, six-and-twenty years ago.'

The Major's face was a study. Surprise, delight, and incredulity seemed struggling for the mastery. He took off his hat, and stood bareheaded. I hardly know why, but that one little gesture seemed to tell me, better than the most passionate protestations would have done, that the old love had been kept a treasured and a sacred thing. And I think, from the faint sweet smile that gathered round her mouth as she looked up at him, that the same thought came to auntie.

'And you are Hetty!' he said. 'Yes, I know you now.'

'You had forgotten the six-and-twenty years, Major Blake. I knew you from the first.'

'And would you really have let me go without a word or a sign?' he asked.

'Why not?' she replied. 'How could I know you would wish to be reminded of old times?'

'Reminded! I have never forgotten. I tried my hardest to forget, and couldn't. Although you preferred another—'

'Another! What other?'

'Young Sandys. Did you not marry him?'

'I have never seen him since.'

At this stage of the conversation it struck me that I was decidedly *de trop*. Major Blake had replaced his hat, and, side by side with auntie, was walking slowly homewards. I had hitherto been following behind; but, reaching a convenient street-corner, I let them proceed alone, and went off, without beat of drum, for a stroll in an opposite direction. When I reached the boarding-house, half an hour later, I found auntie and the Major sitting in the courtyard, under the shade of the great tree. The Major courteously lifted his hat at my approach, and said,

'Miss Danvers, your aunt and I are very old friends; indeed, many years ago, we were engaged to be married, but an unfortunate misunderstanding separated us. We have lost many happy years of life together, but I hope some may still remain to us. I trust we shall have your good wishes.'

I looked from the one to the other.

'You dear darling auntie, then you really are going to be married after all! Of course I wish you joy, and Major Blake too, from the very bottom of my heart!'

'I don't know,' said auntie, shaking her head doubtfully. 'I'm a little afraid we are two old fools.'

'Nay, dear,' said the Major, raising her hand gallantly to his lips. 'Perhaps we were young fools, but that is six-and-twenty years ago. Let us hope we have learned true wisdom now.'

I don't know how the secret

oozed out, but before twenty-four hours were over every one in the boarding-house, even to white-capped Adèle and her assistant maidens, knew that the handsome English Major had met an old love in the person of the gentle little lady with the sweet smile and the soft gray hair, and that after a separation of five-and-twenty years they were again engaged to be married; and they were promoted to the rights and privileges of engaged lovers accordingly. And lovers they unmistakably were, though in a very quiet way. No lover of twenty could have been more devoted than this weather-beaten warrior to his faded bride; no girl of seventeen more proud and happy in her lover's devotion than dear old auntie. They ought, by every rule, to have been ridiculous; but somehow nobody seemed to think them so; and I really believe they had the heartiest sympathy of every one in the house.

I must pass over the homeward journey, and the astonishment of

our friends at Fairfield, when auntie returned, engaged to be married. Some few of them had known Major Blake as a young man, but to most of them he was a stranger. Many were the questions, and long the explanations, before everything was accounted for to everybody's satisfaction; but it was done at last. And then came the preparation of the trousseau; and at last, this very morning, the happy pair have been made one, and auntie is off to the Isle of Wight to spend her honeymoon. And last night, just before we went to bed, she called me into her own room, and, taking out the little red Prayer-book, said,

'Ruth dear, I am going to give you this little book as a parting remembrance. You know how I have treasured it; and you won't value it the less, I am sure, for having been so dear to me. And if, when Mr. Right comes, Ruth, you are ever tempted to be wilful, or wayward, or pain a heart that loves you truly, think of your old aunt Hetty, and don't forget the moral of the faded leaf.'

ANGELO J. LEWIS.

## A CHINESE OPIUM DEN IN EAST LONDON.

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ANY of my readers who may have commenced *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, will remember that Charles Dickens lays the scene of the first chapter of that romance in an opium den in the east of London. This 'den,' which the great master described so graphically, lies in a small alley not far from Ratcliff Highway. It is now kept by a Chinese, Johnson by name; the former proprietress, 'Lascar Sal,' having died, some few years back, in a neighbouring workhouse—a strange refuge for the dying moments of a woman who, during her lifetime, had extracted, from the hard-earned wages of the Chinese sailors, enough money to have built a villa in South Kensington, and to have driven in the Park in her own brougham.

Accompanied by M., an experienced East End detective, I paid Johnson a visit in the month of March. Branching off from Ratcliff Highway, diving down some tortuous streets, we arrived at the little courtyard about a quarter past nine in the evening. M. knocked at the door, and Johnson, recognising him, at once admitted us. Being quite accustomed to midnight callers, without a word he led the way up a rickety staircase, and entered a room. At first we could see nothing through the dense cloud of smoke. After a minute or so, however, our eyes got accustomed to the density of the atmosphere, and, by the aid of a flickering paraffin lamp, we saw a scene very strange, very shocking, but, I am bound to add, very interesting.

On either side of the little room was placed a bedstead covered with coarse matting, and on these beds lay seven or eight Lascars and Chinese in various stages of intoxication. Some had only just begun to smoke, and the normal gravity of their faces seemed to have vanished for the nonce at the immediate prospect of the entrancing pipe. Two Chinese and a Lascar, utterly overpowered, lay huddled up in one corner of the bed; their faces were deadly pale, their lips bloodless, their limbs lifeless; and had it not been for the almost imperceptible motion caused by respiration, one could easily have supposed that they were dead. The rest of the party had been smoking some time, but were not yet in a state of imbecility; and here seemed an excellent opportunity to watch the gradual effects of the drug. Very gently did they inhale the smoke, and gently emitted it in huge volumes. In a few draws the pipes were finished, and then listlessly dropped; but immediately they were refilled by Johnson, and placed in the hands of the smokers, who, with an obvious effort, lit them at the little hand-lamp, and once more began to smoke, till at last their bodies grew limp, and the expression faded from their faces, as the ecstasy of oblivion stole gradually over them.

The smell was something frightful, as the room was only twelve feet by eight, and both door and window were closed. The utter squalor of the scene, the dirt of the room, the dirt of the mattress, and O,

the still more terrible dirt of the smokers themselves, are more easily imagined than described. The one thing that strikes an Englishman accustomed to his tobacco-pipe, is the enormous amount of trouble a Chinese has to undergo to gain his modicum of pleasure. Moreover, it requires a certain amount of skill to fill an opium-pipe; and this feat is accomplished by extracting with a strong piece of wire or a skewer a small knob of the semi-liquid drug, and then cramming it into a little hole in the bowl of the pipe. As the opium is scarcely more solid than ordinary glue when heated for use, this is no easy task. The pipe is then lighted; but in a brief couple of minutes it is finished, and the whole process has to be again gone through. Verily, the bottomless water-jar was but little less trouble to the daughters of Danaus, than is the opium-pipe to the poor Chinese. Not that Johnson's customers had much trouble, I can assure you, as mine host looked after them very briakly, notwithstanding the appalling fact that he has habitually smoked twenty pipes a day for no less than forty-two years. Johnson, like the rest of humanity, is a *laudator temporis acti*, and says the trade of an opium den is not what it used to be; and though a fair amount of the 'heathen Chinese's' wages finds its way into Johnson's pocket, a still larger quantity, I am happy

to say, goes to swell the exchequer of that admirable and beneficent institution, the Asiatic Home, where, at a moderate charge, poor John Chinaman can find every comfort and luxury—with the single exception of opium, which is strictly prohibited.

I think it only fair to Johnson to say that his establishment has vastly improved since the abdication of Lascar Sal, who, from all accounts, was as depraved in morality as she was hideous in appearance; and that the present proprietor *does* give his patrons a fair amount of oblivion for their money can be seen by any casual visitor like myself. This change for the better is possibly due to Johnson's 'missus,' who is an English woman, and is, strange to say, a supporter of the temperance movement, and, on this particular evening, was away at a temperance tea. Better than it was fifteen years ago the 'den' may be, but bad is the best in all such places as these; and no severer blow has been dealt the low publicans, the grinding lodging-house keepers, and the whole race of sharks who batten on the poor sailor, than the foundation of such institutions as the Asiatic Home. Long may they prosper! At last, having seen all Johnson's customers wafted away to dreamland, we said good-bye to our host, and were not sorry to change the atmosphere of opium smoke for that of the cold night air.

J. RANDAL.



## Riverside Sketches.

### V.

#### 'DADDY.'

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JUDGING from his looks he was quite an old man. But this appearance of age and feebleness was undeniably augmented by the adventitious aid of much grime and frequent fasting. Starvation is a wonderful engraver, and stamps indelible traces. The little flesh there yet remained on Daddy's face was lined and furrowed with seams and wrinkles well defined by dirt. His sunken eyes were bleary and lifeless, looking about with a dull indifference to all ills surrounding him. It was not difficult to imagine him a skeleton with bones rattling. Being nearly toothless, Daddy mumbled in his speech, though the language he used was never coarse and unseemly, as that of other dwellers in and about Linnet Lane.

For many years this old man had been a riverside loafer, carrying messages from wharf to wharf, and in days gone by doing porterage, and even dock work. He was well known on both sides of the river, up and down, though now regarded as a superannuated labourer, not fairly entitled to go on living. At Lambeth, when seen amongst coal-barges, rotten timbers, and crumbling wharves, Daddy seemed a part of the general going to the bad there, and no one took much heed of him. But at Southwark, and at the brisker points of arrival and departure, he was apt to get in the way of bargemen, and to receive occasional ill-usage beyond much foul language. Originally he had

been stranded in Linnet Lane, which regarded him still as one of its oldest inhabitants. Yet there were intervals when he disappeared from this region.

No one knew what became of him on these periodical absences from the riverside, neither did any one greatly concern him or herself with speculations regarding his whereabouts or well-being. Life and the matter of daily bread were things precarious to so many in this locality. It was nothing exceptional to be hungry, or for one old and friendless to die of starvation without a roof to cover him. If Daddy's small spark had been extinguished during his disappearance, none would have been the wiser. He would not have been missed. As it was, when he reappeared in his old quarters he was generally greeted with surprise. It was a marvellous old head, in the estimation of the majority, to keep itself above ground so long, and a sort of homage was insensibly paid to his tenacious grip of life. Vitality was a creditable distinction.

At the Lamb of Goshen he was a character well recognised. The proprietress of this favourite lodging-house looked favourably upon him. Mrs. Doo had been even known to give him credit for a night's lodging, which went far to authenticate his superior position of respectability. It was required of ordinary lodgers to pay before even getting a sight of their shelter.

It was most frequently when

Daddy was suffering from an attack of ague that he sought a temporary home here. His means did not always warrant the luxury of a roof to his head. To the vulgar and profane he went by the name of 'Daddy Long-legs.' His lank attenuated limbs, with a certain angularity of an elastic nature about the joints, testified to some resemblance between him and the timid insect specified. Moreover, Daddy had a similar weakness for light, being caught nightly by the glare of ginpallaces, and, in spite of his infirm appearance, he could get over long distances in an incredibly short space of time. Flags, the needlewoman who resided permanently at the Lamb of Goshen, and a philosopher of no mean calibre after her lights, had speculated for years concerning Daddy's antecedents, without arriving at a conclusion anything like satisfactory. He had been an institution beneath Mrs. Doo's roof tree long before this astute young person had drifted hither. She vainly endeavoured to settle in her own mind how this offshoot of a higher circle had come to take root amongst the dregs of humanity.

Why had he lost caste and been driven like a pariah into this outer darkness? Certainly he must have known better days, for, miserable drink-sodden wretch as he was, he still retained an educated manner of speech, and refrained from cursing and swearing. Besides, Flags knew that he could write a clerkly hand, graceful and easy, though the letters were sadly unsteady in the up-strokes.

It was quite true that, even in these days of his fallen fortunes, certain traces of refinement lingered about Daddy. Yet surely his life for five-and-twenty years might have worn away every vestige of delicacy or gentle training.

Flags, who was compassionate as well as philosophic, no common union of qualities, had also a vein of romance in her organism. She wove a calamitous history about his past.

However, courteous manners and good birth were not generally at a premium in Linnet Lane. Its people hardly knew what such things signified. He who kicked hardest and fought strongest generally won the game as far as they knew. None but Flags observed or admired the vestiges of gentility lingering about Daddy. Hers was a contemplative existence, for she was paralysed and unable to take much part in the kicking and struggling for a living. But she knew that even his ragged clothes were worn in a way that set him apart amongst a motley crew. To the last of their tatters there was an attempt at decency. Even a piece of old sacking, to her fancy, took a look of apology when shielding his shivering shoulders. It was apparent on the rare occasions that Daddy was washed and shaved that he had once been a singularly handsome man. The contour of his face, the high-arched nose, and thin nostril were widely different from the type prevailing at the riverside. Only the wavering lips and spiritless glances betrayed the weakness of the moral man, partly giving the clue to a downward descent.

Yet even the weakest of God's creatures may be helped on the wicked way by Christian kicks and revilings. The encouragement to shake off sloth and infirmities of mind is too often given with the poisoned dagger of contempt from virtuous hands. Alas! they that bind up the wounds of folly, and pour the oil of comfort upon failure, are few and far between in this world.

It was noticed about Daddy,

by some of the more respectable women who had fallen to the same level of degradation, that he was never rude or violent in his cups. No amount of the vile compounds supplied by neighbouring public-houses was able to rouse in him things sensual or devilish. He was never cruel, never coarse. Verily Daddy in these degraded days was still a gentleman in his instincts towards womanhood, unsexed though it might be. No more than the Ethiopian can change his skin could he cast off the nature born in him. Amongst a crew of rough blackguards, fighting, swearing, murderous villains, he demeaned himself towards the helpless and oppressed after an unheard-of fashion.

None knew or cared whether Daddy was guilty of some heinous crime which had brought him into hiding here. It was so long ago since he had first appeared in these shady recesses, this limbo of vice, that the generation which might have recalled his former terror of the daylight, and his abashed and down-trodden mien, had floated away. Oblivion had washed over former offences, and Daddy was now a comparatively white sheep in a locality notorious for harbouring dangerous characters. The renown of Linnet Lane had been greatly on the increase in the course of twenty years. Daddy had here sunk untraced into a feeble and harmless old age. The mould and rust of misery and poverty had masked him effectually from all recognition. Yet he would repeat often to Flagg, with angry petulance,

'I'm not seventy yet, though they do call me old.'

And Flagg would gravely nod her head to pacify him, as she darned the rents in the gay bunting which always surrounded her,

yet not believing his asseverations. But it was the truth. Five-and-twenty years ago, when Daddy had sheltered his head in this slum, his hair had been a light brown, his cheek unfurrowed. Then he was a man not much over forty, erect and strong. Now drink and its natural consequences of disease and poverty had sapped his strength, marring his features and whitening his bent head. Now he was only a gaunt and feeble old man, whom surely the most vigilant police would not regard a second time as dangerous to the public peace.

Strange to say — or was it strange? — Daddy had acquired an affection for Linnet Lane. He came back to it as to his home. What he best knew of comfort and shelter nowadays was to be found within its precincts. He was beyond asking much of life, but all that he did require was supplied to him here. Bed and board are elastic terms. Straw is a luxury to the homeless wanderer, and a crust of bread sufficiency to the starving. Certainly Daddy's daily necessities were purchased for a few pence, and to sit in the sun on a familiar wharf, watching the steamers go down the river, or barges unlade their freight near at hand, was sufficient excitement to satisfy him. Daddy waited about patiently for employment, and few days passed without his services being required. In between whiles he was at liberty to crawl down the slimy steps and save some spar of drifting wood, a piece of ragged clothing, an empty bottle, or any other flotsam. Such treasures gleaned from the tide would make him completely happy for an hour. Some there were who declared the old man was only half-witted. It was true he had a trick of talking inaudibly to himself, while a dazed

stare in his dim eyes seemed to deny any active intelligence at work. Yet he was quite equal to carry conscientiously and to fetch punctually. None ever scrupled to rely on Daddy's honesty and speed. The children hereabouts reckoned him as one of themselves, a playmate of mature years. Truly there were but few children in Linnet Lane. Those that survived the hard experiences of infancy and attained a reasonable age were drafted away quickly to take part in some labour. Still, there remained here a couple of cripples, a deaf mute, an epileptic sufferer, and half a dozen precocious babies who played pitch-and-toss fiercely with brass buttons, or wrangled over dirty crusts of bread saved from the gutter streams.

Daddy was quite at home amidst this coterie, going shares cheerfully in the proceeds of drains and dust-heaps.

'Hullo, ancient mariner, here yer are agen!' shouted a burly individual of an amphibious description, as he clapped Daddy on the shoulder one fine August afternoon. The old man sat on an empty barrel facing the river, his eyes gazing into vacancy. His emaciated hands were spread out on his knees, as though ready to grasp every ray of the blessed sunshine. Daddy was happy. The warmth was so pleasant, and the rippling of the river against the staves of the wharf was soothing.

'Come along, old un! Wake up a bit, I say. I wants yer to mind of my boat t'other side. I've got a pertickler job across the river, and yer'll mebbe have to wait an hour. But yer pretty well used to waitin', Daddy, and that luck of yours it don't seem to turn up.'

Daddy's employer, pleased at his own facetious remark, gave vent to a hoarse laugh. The old man rose slowly and silently as a boat moor-

ed beside a barge was pointed out to him.

'Stiff in the joints, old chap, hey? I guess yer've been on the spree, a-lyin' out of doors at nights. No constitootion 'ull stand them sorter tricks. A man of your years oughter know better than to injoy hisself in that way.'

Daddy was moving across the wharf with his companion. This moral reproof appeared to leave a sting.

'I am not so old,' he mumbled resentfully, halting to hurl this feeble protest at the other man.

This one jeered,

'Oho! don't set yer back up. Why, we all on us knows yer a chicken jest out of the egg. Yer doesn't know nought about nothing, now does yer? Come, Daddy, look alive, and show how spry yer can be. I'm good for a joey and a drop of summat, if yer waits my time. Yer can pay for a warm bed at the Lamb of Goshen to-night, and mebbe that there Flags 'ull stand yer supper. She do favour the very old and the very young, whichever yer may call yerself.'

The man gave vent to another rude laugh, while Daddy prepared to descend the oozy steps. The boatman was highly pleased with his own jocose mood. After a pause he continued, as a soliloquy,

'She's a rum un is that there Flags. Mother Doo she tells me as that gal coins a mint of money with her mending of Union Jacks and suchlike. The Baroness she calls on her, for a joke. She's very charertable is Flags, like the old gal as built Columbia Market, and is for ever a-settin' up of water fountains for them as don't ask for water. She ain't a very sensible one neither, in noways 'cording to the noospaper.'

Mr. Bobby Brown here stuck out his under lip in a manner sig-

nificant of extreme contempt, and rolled his huge body down the steps.

The Baroness's intelligence or charities did not appear greatly to excite Daddy. He was more interested in the leaky condition of the waterman's boat. He sat ankle-deep in water, and as the ponderous worthy stepped in, innumerable crevices were made apparent by little streams running in.

'It's a cranky tub,' said the old man, in a complaining way, as Mr. Brown took up the sculls.

'Well, what of that? Ain't yer nigh ready for kingdom come? Them as knows says it ain't bad to be drowned. Yer goes down with a full stomach, anyways.'

Yet the brawny arms pulled vigorously, as though their owner had no mind to meet with a watery grave.

'I'd rather not,' said Daddy, faintly whining, with his dim eyes fixed on the swirling waters eddying about them.

The river was so eager and so quick always—just as ready to carry a human body out of reach as bottles, broken bits of wood, and other coveted treasures. At this juncture, Daddy inconsiderately pulled the tiller-rope, and slewed the boat round to the stream.

'Curse you!' said his employer, with angry emphasis. 'I ain't goin' out with the tide. We'll be at Greenwich in five minutes this rate. If yer don't behave quiet, I'll not stand yer the drink.'

This threat seemed all-powerful. Daddy sat still as a wooden image, making no further protest against drowning. Arrived at the other side, the burly boatman attached his boat to a ring, and, stepping up some oozy boards, looked down on the old man rocking on the stream.

'Yer can bale her out a bit, Daddy, while I'm gone. There's a tin mug somewher's as 'ull do it. It 'ull pass the time, and save yer from drowning. Ha, ha!'

But after Daddy had baled a good half-hour without any rest, his back began to ache seriously. The dirty contents of the boat were by this time considerably diminished, but the wages promised to him seemed yet a good way off. It was very hot in the sun, sheltered beneath the staves of the black wharf, where the smell of tar and bilge-water was sickening. The old man's lips and throat were parched, and the drink whereof his friend had hinted seemed ever more desirable. One thin hand stole into his pocket. After much diving, it brought forth a coin. Daddy looked at it sorrowfully, turning it over once or twice. It was only a halfpenny. No drink to his knowledge, outside the fountains of benevolence, could be obtained for that infinitesimal sum. He sighed heavily, returning it to his pocket. Then, with a sudden and surprising movement of vigour, he took up the battered tin at his feet, and dipped it over the side of the boat. He brought it up full, and looked at the contents before taking a long draught of the muddy water.

'Here's to her health,' he said, in a whisper; 'it's her birthday.'

Again he dipped it, and drank once more to the very dregs of the cup.

'I can't be thirsty now,' he mumbled, with a childlike smile, as though at having worsted an enemy. With a sudden change of mood, he lifted his face to the sky. 'Almighty God, save me from drink one day.' Daddy did not look so old and decrepit when in that prayerful mind. Something of life and energy animated



his bleary eyes and straightened his bent head for a moment.

Presently Mr. Brown returned, puffing a short black pipe and perspiring freely.

'Come on now, old man. I've had my drink, and I'm game to treat yer. Hot and strong, or cold and weak, as yer likes it. The Blue Bells is a-waitin' the honour of yer company.'

One grimy fist was slowly withdrawn from the waterman's pocket, to assist Daddy up the slimy steps. But the old man drew back from the extended hand, shaking his head with a palsied motion, regarding all the time the drops of water shining at the bottom of the tin mug.

'I'm not thirsty,' he muttered, with feeble resistance.

'Yer ain't dry? Since what o'clock? Bless us, that *is* a new dodge! Have the temp'rance sergeants a-been 'listing of yer since I've been gone? Wery well; I'm not a-goin' to press yer, and there ain't no time for a man of my character to lose in arguifying. We'll jest go home agen, and yer shall have tuppence extra instead. Don't yer never say as Bobby Brown is a mean skunk. Why, Daddy, old chap, if you'd only be mod'rate, the liquor wouldn't do yer no harm. I ain't got much opinion of Blue Ribbons myself. A poor man must put summat inside hisself to keep him going. There ain't nought like it for givin' yer a hearty feeling, when times is bad.'

It is evening. The hour when in far-away rural scenes there is the hush of peace and oncoming night. At this time, the lush grass in pasture-lands is sweet-smelling and dewy, and little wandering airs carry about perfumes on their wings. But here no peace reigns. The predatory

tribes round about Linnet Lane do not hold with the night being a time for rest. It is in the dark hours that their most profitable labours, their most enjoyed pleasures, are pursued.

The hot August air is tainted at all moments with evil odours in the latitude of the riverside; but most of all does the vile filth and corruption seem apparent when evening breezes are doing their best to drive away the vitiated atmosphere. No such light breaths can purify these alleys and lanes. Every den and dwelling is saturated with noxious gases. The effluvium and stench exhaled from cellars and reeking bars would be unbearable to organs not well seasoned to such abominations. But the fumes of beer and spirits are happy antidotes against over-nice perceptions, deadening the senses imperceptibly. Only new-comers, unsophisticated to disease and drunkenness, were aware that they breathed a poisonous atmosphere in these purlieus.

Daddy was long past knowing this. To-night repeated drams had so highly exalted his spirits and weakened his observation of externals that he reckoned the lane and neighbouring slums a very paradise. His mood was joyous, and in front of the bar of the chief public-house in Linnet Lane he shouted, sang, and danced to the amusement of a company of ruffians. Outsiders came dropping in from the street, to spend their last pence in the endeavour to search out the meaning of so much mirth and jollity. Verily, the aspect of the long-limbed gray-headed old man was a sight to make angels weep. The people here only laughed, applauding vehemently. Their souls were dead within them. The antics and mouthings of an



intoxicated old man, gibbering sometimes in a foreign tongue, and gesticulating in a meaningless way, amused them mightily. Roars of husky laughter, shrieks, and yells made every pewter ring. To this end they too might come, but the spectacle pointed no moral to such blunt susceptibilities.

One woman, indeed, haggard and emaciated, laughed in an hysterical way, the tears coursing down her thin cheeks and falling on her tawdry finery unchecked. She was hustled without ceremony on one side, as a ring formed to watch the frenzied manoeuvres of 'Daddy Long-legs' in a hornpipe.

But the tide of excitement and exhilaration ebbed. Some men becoming quarrelsome were ejected; others had drunk themselves into stolidity. When finally the hour came for the public-house to be cleared, no one took much heed of Daddy. He had fallen exhausted on a bench some time back. He breathed stertorously, with eyes half closed. Some vague glimmer of reason left to him helped him to stagger to his feet at the sound of shutters closing. The barman supported him to the swing-doors, through which he disappeared into the night.

Outside, the street was almost empty, one by one the denizens of various courts and rotten tenements having reeled or slunk home. Daddy had not a penny in his pocket. The sixpence he had earned in the afternoon had found its way into the pockets of the publican, to supplement the drinks bestowed upon him by admiring friends. The old man, tottering uncertainly, with skinny hands stretched out to the walls of dwelling-places, crept along the uneven pavement. He made for the uppermost end of the lane, the most remote from the river.

Here there was a friendly doorstep which he knew of old. He laid himself down, and pillowed his white head upon it.

Not for long, though. An unusual amount of vigilance had been remarked about the police in this locality recently. The division in charge had manifested a determination to subdue rioters and to sweep away all waifs and strays. Daddy was marked by a virtuous patrolling officer. Within ten minutes of going to rest, a powerful hand was placed upon his rags. The zealous officer of the law failed to shake sense into him. He muttered, 'I'm not thirsty,' as though it might be a friendly clutch inviting him to enter some familiar bar. Turning round, he drowsily embraced the cold stone.

'So drunk, are yer? Come along of me to the lock-up. We don't mean to have no street rows here.'

The old man was ruthlessly dragged to his feet by a vigorous pull. He looked about him in bewilderment, but made no effort to escape till the policeman laid a forcible hand of persuasion upon his arm.

'Yer don't want to come my ways! No, I dessay not. Most of yer doesn't.'

Roused by this indignity of arrest, Daddy showed fight in a feeble fashion, shouting in a cracked voice all the way to the police-station.

The next morning the wretched old man woke in his cell, fully alive to his situation. Somehow or another luck had favoured him throughout years of drunkenness. He had always escaped the law hitherto. Now he would be charged with being drunk and disorderly, and probably the magistrate would commit him to prison. To prison! All Daddy's

numbed perceptions revived now. The thought penetrated his dull brain with a consciousness of final disgrace. If it was possible to rouse in him a degree of life, this aspect of affairs did so.

The magistrate before whom he would be brought was reckoned a philanthropist by the world, a man of whom it was declared that he was not altogether fit to administer justice. When Daddy heard Mr. Ruthven's name bandied about by other sinners in the same condemnation as himself, a flicker of intelligence made itself manifest in his eyes, which never seemed to see quite clearly. He rubbed his ears as though doubting their evidence.

'Who did you say they would take us before?' he said, pulling the sleeve of a vicious-looking navvy. There was a sharp intensity in the old man's voice.

'O, haven't you heard? there's a new beak in these parts. Ruthven they calls of him. Not a bad bloke neither. He don't bullyrag a chap afore sending of him to quod. There's some as he lets off wunnerful easy, but they ain't my sort. Shut up, Daddy, yer a cursed old fool!'

The wretched sinner had fallen on his knees on the stone floor, grasping his gray head in his hands. His senses were now sharpened, and these lucid intervals were very terrible to him. What help, what anodyne was there for him but in drink?

'My God, my God, before him!' he muttered inaudibly to the rest.

'This Ruthven he ain't been here long, and I'll go bail he'll soon tire of his work. There's too much of it; never no white gloves here,' said the navvy, with proud and oracular cheerfulness.

Daddy's was the last case on this day. When the policeman led in his miserable victim with a

virtuous air of having done his duty, the court was half empty. It was not a tempting spot to remain in on a sweltering August day, and the varicous friends and relatives of delinquents had taken their departure as promptly as might be.

Mr. Ruthven was a genial-looking man of well-preserved middle age, prosperous and portly beneath the burden of threescore years. He was an absolute contrast to the down-trodden and despised culprit who was led forward. Yet he looked at the trembling sinner with a glance of compassion. The old man never lifted his eyes to his judge, and from his immobility it might well be concluded that the proceedings were incomprehensible to him. Daddy was let off with a reprimand and a warning, and slunk out of court in a noiseless way, without regarding this most merciful magistrate.

Yet what need had he to fear? How was it possible that Mr. Ruthven should recognise in this disreputable old man an associate of former days, a comrade in the counting-house, a familiar friend at home?

Ay, truly life's trump cards had been dealt to John Ruthven at his birth. Sober, frugal, discreet, what wonder that he should score the game of respectability and success?

As Daddy reached the door he cast one swift glance of anxiety towards the magistrate. If he had known him? If by chance he should go home to his luxurious dwelling in the west, and speak to her, before her children, of a miserable old man brought before him—one he had recognised as a friend of youth long thought to be dead? Would *she* care? Would *she* remember, and shed a tear for a wasted life?

After this event Daddy sank lower by degrees. His degradation was hopeless, and it appeared that his life had not long to run.

About this time strange events took place in and about Linnet Lane. The stricter supervision of the police was followed by other signs of attention roused. Ladies began to visit the sick and poor on the borders of this wretched slum. Very cautiously they felt their way towards the riverside. A manifest interest in the needs and concerns of a vile and neglected neighbourhood had been stirred. A long cry had reached happy dwellers in a purer atmosphere, and benign Charity stretched out her hands to purify and bless. By degrees the incursions of a noble army of good women crept up our Lane.

The Lamb of Goshen suffered such visitors at first not gladly, but of necessity. Only Flags after a few weeks' resistance began to admit there might be some good in it.

'They don't come a-settin' themselves up as better nor we, or talkin' of things we don't know. But they brings flowers and noospapers with pictures, and speaks 'bout our work. No, I can't say as I minds of 'em as long as they don't hinder. She giv me a hanckercher, did one on 'em—see here, Daddy; an' she knows a sight 'bout Union Jacks and ensigns. She said as she'd bring me a book with all the countries in 'em with their flags.'

The needlewoman suspended her work a moment, and rested her pointed chin on one hand, looking with a sort of wistful gaze in her eyes towards a Union Jack that was always suspended behind her sofa.

'She's like a big flower, that lady she is. She sorter makes yer lift yer eyes'and snuff up as

though she wur sweet-smellin'. She's got a white skin, with hair all yaller like gold. O Lord! I feels the better of seein' of her. Look here, Daddy, what's this writin' say! She's never tell'd me her name, but I'm a sorter curious. This book belongs of her. I can spell out of a print book fine and easy, but reading of writing don't somehow come natteral to me. They letters wi' tails and heads they beats me.'

Flags made this admission with an exasperated air, giving the book a thump of vindictive feeling.

Daddy took up the work, and fluttered the pages back to the fly-leaf. He was accustomed to be called upon to decipher letters for the illiterate, but not accustomed to receive a shock at any words that met his view. The book fell out of the old man's hands. The film of indifference passed away from his eyes, and he stared with intensity at Flags. An abject terror was depicted in his gaze, and a violent ague fit passed over him. He shivered and trembled audibly.

'Well, old chap, what do it say?' said the needlewoman, snapping her thread in her impatience.

'Lily Ruthven,' he stammered feebly, articulating the words between shudders. 'O my God, has she been here—here, Flags?'

He looked round at the dark and dirty dwelling, and a yet more vehement fit of trembling shook his bones.

'Young and fair! O no, that can't be still. Why, it's five-and-twenty years since she was married.'

He clasped his palsied hands and lifted them, shaking, crying out wildly, 'O Lord, O Lord!'

Flags made a flourish with her scissors as she took them up to snip off a thread.

'Why, what's amiss, Daddy? Didn't I tell yer, now, as she's a young gal, younger nor me, and as straight as a ship's mast, with eyes shinin' better nor gas-lamps, and a voice like the tide running? Mebbe this aren't her book; b'longs a librery p'raps. I'll be sure and ask of her next week. Did you know of some one called by that name?'

The girl looked curiously towards her companion. He too looked at her, but furtively, with that strangely painful revival of understanding which visited him between his dissolute days. The hours of soberness were terribly to be feared.

'Ha, ha! Me know her! That's a fine guess! Don't you ever mind what I say, Flags. I'm getting old, and talk nonsense sometimes. It isn't likely, now, that I should know a lady.'

Flags worked her eyebrows in a dubious way, shooting a lightning glance out of her yellow eyes towards the stooping figure. Daddy sat on a three-legged stool, with his knees almost in the grate. Evidently the girl did not think it improbable that this disreputable old man's acquaintance might once have been of superior status. She said, after a pause,

'Things in life I know they changes a bit, Daddy. Yer might have know'd a lady wunst. No offence, old chap.'

For more than a week after the last interview recorded, Daddy did not come near the Lamb of Goshen.

It was the last evening in October that, finding himself with a few pence in his pockets, he crawled to its door. He was much weaker, and his cough shook his attenuated frame more frequently. His poor old hands trembled incessantly. A November fog, anticipating its birthday, was spreading

its hideous yellow breath over all things in the lane.

It was yet too early in the evening for the Lamb to have gathered recruits for the night, but Daddy, as an old and regular customer, knew himself privileged to shelter at its hearthstone before legitimate hours. As he pushed open the door he saw, to his surprise, that Flags was not solitary. Neither was it Mrs. Doo who stood in close conversation with the crippled needlewoman. Some one in a black gown with a long veil hanging behind a close-fitting bonnet had no resemblance to the female viragos and brawny-armed wenches who visited in this locality. This person held a small basket in her hand, and her costume denoted that she belonged to a visiting sisterhood. Daddy had passed ladies in this guise several times lately, slinking out of their way with downcast mien. Now the miserable creature shuffled a step backwards at the aspect of a stranger within. But the lady heard the footstep, and turned her head swiftly. After that movement, Daddy no longer seemed to have the power to stir. What a beautiful serene young face confronted the tottering shame-stricken sinner! Divine compassion and gentleness beamed from it.

'Tis Daddy,' said Flags at once. 'Come along in of yer. I've told all about yer and them shiverin' fits. She is Lily Ruthven her own self, and you was wrong, Daddy; she ain't never been married.'

The old man's eyes were riveted in utter amazement on the girl's face. The Lily he had known in years gone by, with features so like this girl's, had scorned and condemned him, turning away from him with loathing. And yet then he had not been as he was now, so vile a thing past all

redemption. The tender pity for one so helpless and afflicted that shone in the stranger's clear eyes reached Daddy's understanding. He fell back against the wall near the door. With a faint smile trembling about her lips, the lady spoke with exquisite softness and encouragement.

'Will you not stay a moment, and tell me yourself about your illness? Do not go away.'

She paused a moment. He bent his head, not looking at her, but listening intently for the sweet low voice.

'Perhaps I can get you something to ease your cough. If you will wear it, I will bring you a warm jersey that I have knitted myself.'

He nodded, and for a moment the shadow of a smile passed over his face. He was looking at the contents of her basket.

'You like flowers? Ah, yes; I know every one does here. Some of the people say it is years since they have touched one.'

Daddy rose painfully and crept nearer to her, as though drawn by some irresistible influence. She put out a hand, seeing he staggered a little. With a gesture that looked like a bow, he deprecated her aid, and removed his ragged cap.

'You are very weak,' she said, with a little sigh. 'And I can do so little for you all.' She was not hardened yet to the sight of suffering, even when it came as the consequence of sin.

Daddy had a question to ask her. He could not rest unsatisfied. Yet he did not venture to address the lady directly.

'Ask her, Flags,' he said, looking helplessly towards the tawny head bent over the British ensign being repaired.

'Ask her what, Daddy?' said this one promptly, ready at once to take the office of interpreter.

'Ask her—if he—the magistrate—Mr. Ruthven—belongs to her.'

Flags opened her mouth and whistled long and low, working her eyebrows. The lady was busy detaching a little bunch of flowers from the rest. She lifted her head quickly, and looked at Daddy.

'You know him? Ah, yes; I see. He is my father—he is a very good man. He wished me to visit in this district.'

'O my God!' said Daddy, in a long sob, as he looked at the little hand which held some violets towards him. Tears were coursing down his furrowed cheeks, as he lifted the fragrant flowers to his face. Is there not something about the smell of fresh violets which ever appeals to hard or sad hearts? They breathe a message of innocence and modesty wherever they are carried. They do not mock the poor and desolate with any tale of luxury and warmth. Theirs is no exotic perfume, to overpower and sicken those that have their habitations in dismal dwellings. Neither do they flaunt gay colours, or proclaim a handsome form, to deride the ragged and unclothed.

In one short moment Daddy was carried back to a sheltered nook in a sweet old-fashioned garden far away from here.

There, in the days of boyhood, he had been wont to gather posies for a fair young mother. Merciful Heaven! how many years of reckless dissipation separated him from that recollection! She was long at rest in a peaceful grave, and all her hopes and fears and prayers for the erring one were over.

Again the gentle thrilling voice of the strange lady roused Daddy from a sort of lethargy. Once more the look of intelligence was awakened.

'You like them, do you not?



Violets are early this year. I have them sent from my home in the country, to bring *here*.'

That *here* was breathed softly, almost reverently. For, indeed, to Lily Ruthven the aspect of life she faced in this quarter was full of awe. The responsibility of doing good lent her a gravity which sat strangely on her young face.

After she had gone away, Daddy sat silent and absorbed on his stool, looking intently into the fire. Perchance he saw strange pictures there, for sometimes a smile moved his wan lips. As the evening shadows crept into the room, Flags put down her work and watched her companion attentively. At first he did not notice her attitude.

'Does *my* young lady call of *your* Lily Ruthven to mind? Were she sweet-lookin', too? You looks rare and happy, Daddy, to-night. Tell us all about her.'

There was a sort of petulant curiosity perceptible in the girl's remark. Her companion did not answer, only fingering the violets fondly and incessantly.

'You was respectable wunst, Daddy, I knows. O, you don't never deceive of me. Why did yer come down to this?' A sweep of the young woman's hand indicated her derision of their mean surroundings. 'You was used to droring-rooms, and meat every day, and shirts with buttons on, and socks, and what not, I'll go bail,' she pursued, with vindictive energy towards such luxuries.

Daddy smiled with a long-lost sweetness. The halo of a far-off youth seemed about him to-night. It was not the Daddy best known in Linnet Lane. The breath of the flowers he held had effaced all that was vile and weak.

'Don't ask me, Flags—don't ask questions. I've never been

one to talk much, have I, now?' he appealed, in a weak quaver.

There was silence for a few seconds. Flags, who was not destitute of tact, felt the rebuff keenly. She turned her head.

'O, no; I won't ask no questions. I'd bust of curiosity afore I'd have the impudence of some. No; you ain't never been one to prate of yer grand days, I'll say that for yer, Daddy,' she said finally, as the sense of justice pressed forward.

'It wouldn't be fair to tell,' resumed Daddy, looking strangely over his shoulder, as though he saw something: 'the girl might learn about me, and perhaps she might not come again. I'll not bring that trouble on you.'

'What girl?' said Flags sharply, thinking he was talking what she called 'wild.'

Daddy pointed to the door.

'She—the lady that was here just now. She must never know who I am, Flags—never, never.'

The needlewoman tossed back her yellow mane in her amazement. She laid one thin nervous hand on Daddy's arm.

'She do belong of your folks, then?' she said, with irrepressible curiosity. 'I'll never speak of it, Daddy, if you'll trust of me. Tell quick—there's others may be comin' in.'

No answer. Daddy, smiling into the fire, seemed to have relapsed into his dream-world.

The next morning, the old man was too ill to rise with the other lodgers. A complaint was laid against him down-stairs to Mrs. Doo. Daddy had coughed so vehemently, and muttered so incessantly, during the night-time, that half of the men had been disturbed. They loudly demanded the return of their money, with a certain degree of menace in their



attitude. However, the landlady having vilified the complainants with more than customary vigour, they were driven out into the street. Mrs. Doo then promptly ascended the ladder-like staircase to investigate Daddy's condition. She saw at once that he was very near death, and suspended the use of her tongue. What availed abusive oratory in the face of that mighty visitant who could not be driven away or be dictated to? Now the landlady was pitiful, nay, she was almost courteous, towards Daddy. He was going away to lodge elsewhere, and, perchance, in that unknown bourn he might do her a good turn. The beauty of his youth had come back to the old man's face, and a placid serenity appeared to have smoothed away the marks of dissipation. His eyes were clear when he opened them, and his voice had lost its husky indistinctness. Mrs. Doo lifted the straw-stuffed sacking, and shook it to ease his posture: she filled a mug with water, placing it beside him, and fetched a blanket from her own bed. Then she went down-stairs, and bade a strong navvy, yet loitering in her kitchen, to carry Flags up-stairs to watch beside Daddy.

'I can't let him die by hisself,' she said, as a sort of justification of these unusual movements. But the old man was scarcely conscious of the good offices of his friends. Only occasional gleams of intelligence visited him. He lay quite still, whispering broken sentences now and then. These whispers had no relation to latter-day scenes, but Flags pieced a story out of them, as she would have told you:

'I'm used to patching, you see. I makes summat out of shreds and bits as other folks 'ud give no heed to.'

So she patched together the tale of Daddy's life, and it was not far wrong. The gay standard she was mending was blistered with her tears before the evening. Towards dusk, Mrs. Doo again brought a muscular lodger up-stairs. This time it was Daddy, who was to be removed to her own garret.

'He'll be comfortabler there, and I'll sleep along of you, Flags, to-night,' she said, with asperity. 'Twon't never do for the lodgers to be turned out of here, and me a widder, and to lose of my custom.'

But Flags never went to rest at all that night. She sat beside the truckle-bed, without a light, throughout the long hours, watching the stars rise and set, through two feet square of glass.

Think of that, my friends, you who may think it a kindly service to keep watch beside a sick-bed in a luxurious chamber, with warmth and light at your disposal. At dawn Daddy became restless. When he opened his eyes, they met the earnest gaze of the needle-woman with recognition. The yellow orbs which were wont to shine with such odd lights were rimmed with red now, for Flags had been weeping in the dark. She saw and knew what the gray shadow on Daddy's face meant.

'You ain't got no friends no-where as you wishes to send a word to, Daddy?' she said impressively, bending over him. 'Say as you forgives 'em now, if you've ought agen 'e.'

He shook his head weakly.

'I've nothing against them.'

'Don't go for to die, Daddy, thinking hard of your Lily Ruthven.'

The tears of the girl were falling on the thin hand she held in hers. It was so long since Daddy had seen a woman weep. A

faint tremor of emotion akin to surprise passed over his face.

'I—I don't think hardly of her, Flags, my girl. It was she that thought hardly of me.'

Flags tossed her hair out of her eyes. Her voice sank to a whisper.

'I've heerd yer talkin', Daddy, about them old days. You was a-goin' to marry of your Lily, and she didn't think yer good enuf; and she broke with yer and made excuse as yer weren't steady.'

Again a look of wonderment passed over Daddy's face. He nodded faintly.

'She wur settin' her cap at one that was richer before she sent yer to the rightabouts and to the devil. She might have made a man of yer, though only a slip of a girl who you were nigh crazy about. Bless yer, yer've been a fool, Daddy, but 'tain't no matters now. This 'ere Lily as comes to the lane, she's her daughter, I s'pose.'

Daddy stirred, and muttered something not intelligible, closing his eyes.

'What is yer name, Daddy?' said Flags, still softly stroking his hand.

He opened his eyes with a puzzled look.

'Name?' he repeated. 'I've lost it.' Then, after a little pause, he said, as if interrogating a third person, 'Shall I tell?—does it matter?'

The daylight was advancing in the east. A yellow light illumined Daddy's pinched features. Suddenly he sat up.

'Who called James?' he said, in a clear voice. 'Mother, I am here, he went on.

'James what?' pressed Flags, in an agony of dread, as he fell back on his pillow in a fit of coughing.

'James—James—O, help me! Yes, yes—James Holt.'

The glazing eyes gazed upwards with a sort of rapture.

'Say it agen, so as I can fix it.'

Yet more slowly, more distinctly, the long disused, disgraced name fell from his pale lips:

'James—Holt.'

An hour later Daddy died, and Flags went down-stairs to announce to Mrs. Doo that her friend had taken lodgings elsewhere.

Miss Ruthven came at midday to the Lamb of Goshen.

'You did not expect me. No, it is not my regular day,' she said, entering the dark kitchen, where Flags was busy at work. The needlewoman did not look up with any bright expression of welcome as the lady advanced.

'No,' she answered curtly, bending her head closer over the flag, 'them as is rich and happy easily forgets them as isn't.' There was a thick huskiness in the voice oftentimes too shrill.

'I could not rest,' continued the lady's sweet low tones, 'for thinking about the poor old man I met here the other day. He seems to me as if he had once been in better circumstances—or—or a superior station.' She paused a little, 'as if afraid of touching susceptibilities. 'He cannot live long, I am afraid, and I should like to remove him somewhere where he could be nursed, and die peacefully. Is he any worse to-day?'

Then Flags, unable to repress her emotion, burst into passionate floods of tears, laying her head down on the rickety table. Her sobs shook this unstable rest.

'He'll never be no wuaser, poor old chap! He's gone—he's gone! I don't seem to be no good in Linnet Lane but for to see 'em all die. I never takes a fancy to no one without they goes and dies

a-purpose. There was Ben—him that could sing like an angel—he was drowned a year ago; and now there's Daddy, as I could help a bit, has been and left of me. It seems as though Providence were contrary like to me. I ain't got no one b'longing of me, but I'll never get to like no' one no more. They always ends up by leavin' of me.'

The young lady sat down with a heavy sigh. She pushed back her close-fitting bonnet, as though the weight of it was oppressive. She had put down the basket with the knitted jersey and soothing medicines at her feet. Alas! they would never be required for the sufferer she had sought.

'Dead, is he? So soon! Poor old man! I did not think the end was so near. Flags, O, do not cry so. It breaks my heart. What can I do for you all, for any of you? The misery I see here at every step seems so great, so hopeless. I am powerless to remedy it or to do any good. Tell me, do you know any of Daddy's friends, or where he came from, or what his name was?'

She laid her thin hand on the needlewoman's arm with a sort of gentle entreaty. Gulping down her fierce sobs, Flags threw herself back, revealing a tear-stained face. She broke out with shrill vehemence.

'Friends! My God! they was a nice lot as b'longed of him! Poor old Daddy, he hadn't no cause to seek of 'em out. They'd give him a helping hand to hell, all along of their pride. A kicking of a chap when he's down won't never help him to stand straight. But I don't never b'lieve as the A'mighty won't have no mercy on him. I'll warrant there's a sight of folks 'all get into heaven as others thinks ain't got no right there.'

Many variable emotions flitted over the lady's face as the voice of Flags rose and fell in her angry invective. But she waited a few seconds before answering,

'I too believe, Flags, that "in My Father's house there are many mansions," where the outcasts and friendless will find rest.'

Flags darted a keen glance of inquiry out of her ever-changing eyes, drawing a long snorting breath as if half of doubt.

'You're a lady,' she said defiantly. 'You mightn't like to rub shoulders with some of us, even if we was angels.' Flags mused a few seconds on the probabilities of the hereafter, presently resuming her text. 'Yes, I knows his name now, but it can't be much of a matter to you. Poor Daddy, he were sorter wandering and talkin' wild-like at the last. He thought as how he heard his mother callin' of him. It were James she called, he said.'

The gentle girl who listened clasped her hands softly together. The sweet low tones of her voice fell sadly when she spoke.

'Ah, what a blessed wandering! A little sob checked her speech.

Flags resumed her tale.

'Then he couldn't call to mind the rest of it—how he were called wunst. It were a long time coming, but it came at last. James, James Holt, was how he said it.'

The lady unclasped her hands and stood up. 'Ah,' she said, with a long-drawn breath, inclining her head towards the mantel-board.

The needlewoman could not now see the lovely face. So Miss Ruthven stood for the space of a few seconds. When she turned to go her face was very pale. Her eyes had the strangest look of pain.

'I can do nothing more here to-day,' she said, in a weary voice. 'I am going home now, but I will

soon come again. I will try, Flags, to be—your friend—if you will let me—in the place of those who are gone. Together, perhaps, we might do a little—to help those who suffer, or are wicked—especially those who have been good and innocent—once. Ah, don't turn from me!

'It won't never be the same,' said Flags, with angry resistance towards the sweet pleading. 'You're a lady, and there ain't nought I can do for you, nought as 'ull better and help you.' Then the wretched Flags laid her unkempt head once more upon the rickety table, recipient of so many sorrowful confidences, sobbing out her heart with bitter sighs.

'O Daddy, Daddy, old man, whatever shall I do all along of myself!'

Miss Ruthven came nearer, and touched her on the shoulder. Then Flags burst out once more with fierce vehemence. 'It were *your* folks as treated the old chap so bad, as set him forward in his wicked ways. Did you know of it afore? Was it to pry out of his doings as they sent you here?'

The lady drew back, lifting a look full of agitation.

'How do you know this?' she said, in breathless amazement. 'O, no; it can't be true. My mother, indeed, had a cousin many years ago, called James Holt. I have heard of him, but he was wicked, and died before I can remember.'

Flags watched the quivering lips and softly-falling tears without apparent pity. It was meet that the sin of the mother should wound the heart of the child.

'Ay, it's fine for them as druv him to drink to talk of his badness! How did I know? Why, I heerd the tale from his own lips, when he were talkin' wild. Now, you jest go home and tell them charertable folks o' yourn the

rights of the case, and say as James Holt he's been livin' in hiding next door to starvation for five-and-twenty years. Linnet Lane is a mighty easy place to lose yerself in, I can tell yer.'

Flags sniffed a while without speaking, taking up her task of needlework with designed disregard of her visitor.

'Good-bye,' said Miss Ruthven, lowering her veil as she passed towards the door. There was a solemnity in her tone which might mean a final farewell. Flags looked up, but her words choked her. The door was slowly unlatched. The lady looked back. Flags stretched out one hand, and the visitor came back at the signal.

'Say as yer'll come agen, as yer don't mind of my words. The world it's all topay-turvy, and I don't understand the rights of things. You wasn't to blame for Daddy's wickedness; and—and he called "Lily" at the last, and smiled as pretty and happy as a babby. O Lord, O Lord! O my pretty lady, don't you go and be unforgivin' to me. I'll do anything as you asks. I'll do all I can to help in the lane. My poor old man he died happy along of you.'

And so at this day a paralysed needlewoman and a beautiful young lady work hand in hand in the task of redemption in a riverside slum. The down-trodden and neglected sinners are made known to a visiting sister in a way that seems miraculous, and few there are that reject the offer of that gentle hand to help. The saving presence of 'Our Lily' in the vicinity of Linnet Lane makes itself felt. Out of the ashes of 'Daddy's' ruined life rises the beautiful angel of love and pity, carrying healing on its wings.

HENRY KING.

## FROM THE INEDITED ARABIAN NIGHTS.

IN a letter written by the Rev. Robert Hall to Sir J. Mackintosh, in the third year of the present century, we read of a gentleman who, before the age of seventeen, had made himself master of Hebrew, Chaldee, Persian, Arabic, and Turkish, besides Latin and Greek, and French and Italian, and many other modern languages. This gentleman, who began Arabic at nine, and Chinese at fourteen; who was devoted to the study of music; who was well skilled in horsemanship, and in the management of the scimitar and lance, for which the Mameluke is so remarkable; who had the eye and pencil of an artist, and a deep-rooted sense of religion in addition to other physical and moral excellences too numerous to mention, was Mr. Claudius James Rich, of whom not one person perhaps in twenty thousand has ever heard. It is to him, however, that the reader is mainly indebted for the present paper. It was he who with studious care gathered together, whilst Consul at Bagdad, that fine collection of Oriental manuscripts in over eight hundred volumes, which, having been purchased by Parliament for the British Museum, now reposes in dust seldom swept away, and silence not often disturbed, at the southern extremity of the east wing, adjoining Great Russell Street, forming a portion of what is termed the Manuscript Department of our National Library. Of this large collection, Nos. 7404, 7405, and 7406 are three codices, composed of Oriental paper, the

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first small quarto, and the other two twelvemo, containing altogether some six hundred folios of *The Arabian Nights*, written in the Naskhi character, or that of modern Arabic, by various penmen, who are not on all occasions to be congratulated on the care bestowed on their writing, or the perspicuity of their meaning.

*The Arabian Nights* is as much the work of a single mind as the Book of Proverbs. Instead of being a story, emanating, as is commonly supposed, from one person, it is doubtless a title or framework for a vast collection. It is a vehicle for many tales told by various story-tellers with very different degrees of ability. Many of the stories in the Rich mss. present a remarkable similarity to Western anecdotes. Nor will any reader be surprised at this who remembers how closely connected is the old history, first told by Galland in a Western tongue, of Schahriar and Schahzenan with that of Astolfo and Giocondo in the twenty-eighth Canto of Ariosto's *Orlando*, or the Genie imprisoned in the brazen vessel, in the story of the Fisherman, with the *Diablo Cojuelo* in a phial of Luis de Guevara, or the 'Sleeper Awakened' with the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, or the Enchanted Horse with Chaucer's Steed of Brass, on which Pierre carried off the fair Maguelone, afterwards imitated by Cervantes in his *Clavileño*.

Before entering into the stories in the Rich mss., it were well, perhaps, to say a word about the

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poetry which is commonly interspersed in Arabic tales.

The taste for Arabic poetry is with us generally an acquired taste, and a very little of it is more than sufficient for the English reader. The richness of Oriental invention is for him bombast and extravagance. It is a sublime piece of imagery, from an Arabic point of view, to speak of a tall hero mounted on a big horse as a thirsty pilgrim in search of water, who supposes the starry galaxy to be a watering station; it is a delicate flattery of the beloved to call into court her toothpick as an evidence of the sweetness of her breath, or to compare her mouth to red rich perfumed wine and her teeth to bubbles risen on its surface. Even the student of Donne and Cowley is startled by the quaintness of Oriental poetry. The high-flown metaphysical conceits of which the fair Lulu is the subject are still more strange than the erotic meditations of Marino.

Again, the stereotyped forms of Eastern poetry are to us inconvenient until custom has made them natural. The usual invocation of the beloved in the masculine gender seems to us so uncouth that translators, from Sir William Jones downwards, have almost invariably taken the liberty of introducing a substitute more in accordance with our ideas of propriety and decorum. Not only, however, is the lady turned into one gentleman by the Arabs, but into many gentlemen, and the expert himself is continually perplexed by finding the fair one addressed as *Sirs*! This plural is, of course, the plural of respect used by editors and kings. Then, again, there are certain imaginary camel-drivers to be propitiated when the beloved leaves her imaginary tent, in which condition it is *de rigueur* to represent her at the beginning of a poem. Sometimes an imagi-

nary messenger arrives with tidings from the lady, and is invariably besought to tell his tale over again. Then, too, there is the constant fear of the envious tale-bearer and the malicious whisperer, whichever oppresses the Arabic lover, and prevents him doing more than merely glancing at the name of the lady in question. Thus, in the poems of Beha Eddin Zoheir, the shining moon or swaying branch, both ordinary terms for a beautiful woman, is spoken of as a Somebody. The most elaborate precautions are taken to prevent any circumstance of the poet's amour coming to the knowledge of Amir or Zeid, the Arabic equivalents for Brown and Robinson. Strangeness of form accompanies strangeness of matter. For instance, there is no rule more strictly observed than that the sense should be confined to a single line. All overlapping of meaning is rigorously excluded. Hence arises not only a difficulty of interpretation when a pregnant thought has been placed by the poet on this Procrustean bed, but also a staccato style of composition which wearies us English with its monotony. Still, in spite of all these objections, the Western reader will often find much to admire, even from his own standpoint. 'After noonday the dawn is forgotten,' sings a poet, comparing one hero with another. 'It is not old age,' says a gray-haired lover, 'which has thus whitened my moustache, but the light of the bright mouth I have kissed still clings to it and sparkles.' 'Let me be made happy,' is the request of another to his imaginary messenger; 'let me be made happy for a while by looking on the eyes that have looked on her.' Even Arabic prose is occasionally infected, as it were, by the vicinity of its verse. So, in the story of Gherib, the lofty-nosed or military



preëminent person. His prowess is supreme. Not contented with killing men by dozens, nay, by hundreds, he wars also against 5000 knights on the battlefield, and reduces them to heaps of ashes. On one occasion, when the foes are in number like leaves or raindrops in the morning, he reduces them so considerably with the help of his army before night that not one of them all is left to tell the news. Then, indeed, was the shock of the contending armies like that of two mountains meeting, or of two seas dashing against each other. Then was our hero mounted on a charger swift as cleaving lightning or a blast of wind, a flying charger that could live only in fairyland, and died at once upon contact with mortal soil. Then he bore in his mailed fist that celebrated brand, the enchanted sword of Japhet, the son of Noah (on whom be peace!). But with all this we do not read of that indiscriminate slaughter of children and women which signalised the capture of Jerusalem in 1099 by the steel-clad Crusaders under Godfrey de Bouillon.

Taking up now the second volume of the Rich collection—neatly bound in red sheepskin, or basil, prettily tooled, bearing on its back the familiar *Alf Lailah wa Lailah*, or 'The Thousand and One Nights,' with the mark of the book's particular *pluteum*, or press, and shelf, printed thus in gold: 'Plut. cccxviii. A'—the first lines we glance at tell us of the 'mutilation in a barbarous manner' (as our popular version wisely puts it, without entering into detail) of the Barber's sixth brother, Shacabac. After this tale is ended in the way already well known we come upon a story, which is called—in a sort of cartouche, surrounded by a line drawn in a zigzag fashion by the

scribe, at the side of the page—'The Story of King Adlallah the Just, and of his daughter Sittassalatin.'

In ancient years and days gone by, narrates the historian, there dwelt in the city of Bosrah a wise king called Adlallah Adil, or the Just. He possessed armies and heroes and tributary kings like a flowing torrent: he had also a daughter called Sittassalatin, of such strange beauty and perfection that when she was but four years old men were already tempted by her loveliness. The king committed her to the charge of a doctor named Hafiz, under whom she learnt the whole Koran by heart in two years. At the age of fourteen she became perfect in the sciences, and, by means of a book belonging to her maternal grandfather, obliged her tutor to allow her superiority to himself. Her father, to make trial of her capacity, invited one day a select band of *literati*; and Sittassalatin being placed behind a curtain, answered all their questions in order. They then allowed that she was the unique pearl of her age. In a private interview with Hafiz, the king learnt that his daughter had purposely been kept ignorant of one science because there was in it for her a calamity. 'What science is this?' asks the king. 'The knowledge is with God,' replies Hafiz; a form of speech in Arabic which corresponds with our evasive answer. Upon which, the king, being enraged from disappointed curiosity, orders Hafiz to be killed forthwith. However, upon an assurance of indemnity, the tutor tells him that the science alluded to is that of casting horoscopes of nativities, whereby he knows that a certain foul suspicion will fall on the princess, through which she will be in exile for twelve years—four

years with Arabs, four with rogues, and four with mendicants or gipsies; and that during this period she will give birth to a saint. The princess, who overhears this, makes herself a corner for prayer in the seraglio, and, gathering her maidservants and old women together, instructs them in the true faith.

Now, the king has a concubine called Jasmine, who is by religion a Rafidiyah, or turncoat. When the princess desires her presence she complains of languor and headache, and at last refuses to attend her theological lectures. So the princess, having accused her of heresy, threatens that the king shall sell her as a slave. Jasmine secretly determines on revenge; and one night, while the female slaves are resting on their beds, they hear the noise of stealthy steps passing along the seraglio. One of them rises, and finds a Mameluke, or white slave, approaching the place of the princess. This occurs night after night, while Sittassalatin continues her religious instruction by day. The female slaves, being struck by an apparent inconsistency of conduct on the part of their mistress, debate whether they shall tell the king. Destiny determines that the king hears their debate. He doubts their story, but is advised by Jasmine to sit with the slaves that very night, and satisfy himself with his own eyes. About the fourth hour the Mameluke appears. Then the king says, 'Seize him!' but he escapes. Going afterwards to Sittassalatin, the father finds her with face turned towards Mecca in the posture of prayer. He accuses her of hypocrisy. She kisses her hand, and asks him to explain himself. He mentions the little matter of the Mameluke, and she says, 'It is a lie!' He replies, 'I

myself saw him.' She says, 'I resign myself to what is decreed and destined.' Then the king advances, kisses her between the eyes, cries, 'I commit you to the care of one with whom deposits are never forfeited,' and strangles her. The slaves enter, and set up the accustomed howl. After Sittassalatin has been buried, the people of the city adorn her tomb, while her father consoles himself with the thought that no descendant of his daughter will be able to reproach him with shame.

Now, there was a woodcutter, continues the story-teller, in Bosrah called Kemaleddin, a holy person, who came to graves to read the Koran over them. From midnight he devoted himself to his religious exercises until the dawn. Coming to the burying-place of the princess, he commenced reading. Suddenly he thought he heard a groan from inside the tomb. Imagining it was Satan, he sought refuge from him with God, and cast himself prone upon the ground. Again hearing the groan, he dug out the earth, and behold Sittassalatin crying, 'May God reward you from us with all good!' Then she wrapped herself in her winding-sheet, and went with him to his house. She found the earth his carpet, and the heaven his covering. His furniture consisted of a bowl and a mat—the bowl for pious ablutions, and the mat to sleep on. He had naught else. And when God brought the dawn, she said to him, 'Take this seal ring, and sell it for nine hundred dinars.' When he had brought them to her, she gave him a hundred and said, 'Buy for us carpet and covering and clothes.' After three days she said to him further, 'My desire is that you should purchase for us ten pounds of meat and rice and greens.' He

answered, 'Are we to have a banquet, you and I, in this place?' But she cooked the victuals, and bade him invite his neighbours, the porters of God's book. And he replied, 'On the head and the eye.'

When the neighbours arrive, they eat and drink; and Sittasalatin marries the woodcutter before them as witnesses. One day, going out with her husband to smell the air, she is followed home by a stranger, who at night steals her from her husband's bosom; and day dawns not on her till she finds herself far away. This stranger takes her to a cave, and there makes a proposal of marriage. She offers him a thousand dinars if he will restore her to her husband. As he attempts to use force she prays, 'O Lord, Thou knowest my necessities before I ask.' And behold a horseman at once comes up to her relief, who kills her former captor. He then mounts her behind him, calls her 'my sister,' and brings her to his tribe. At nightfall he makes the same proposal to her as the other; but she reminds him of his fraternal relationship. The custom of the Bedouins, he replies, allows this. Upon which, she at once quotes the Koran to show his conduct is improper, and distinguishes in a most lucid manner the lawful from the forbidden. The whole tribe is ultimately converted to the true faith, and a general divorce takes place. In this tribe Sittasalatin meets Hafiz, who, being a man, can remarry the divorced suitably without blame. Hafiz is persuaded by her to give religious instruction to the men, while she does the like for the women, 'till they knew that which was right and pursued it, and avoided that which was evil.' The princess then gives birth to a son, whom she names

Ahmed. After staying here some time, they are one night attacked by a hostile tribe of Arabs. Upon this, the princess flies into the desert with Ahmed. Here among the mountains she meets with a company of gipsies, to whom she gives religious instruction as usual, and remains with them four years. One day some guests arrive. She offers them food, but they answer, 'We will fast till the time of evening prayer.' Then she knows them to be holy persons, and asks them to make her their dervish, and allow her to travel with them.

The story then returns to her father, with whom the days roll on, till one of his tributary kings presents him with a damsel called Nuzhatannufus, whom he makes his favourite. Jasmine's jealousy is, of course, aroused; and one night the Mameluke is seen as before advancing towards the place of Nuzhatannufus. The king, being told, seizes the Mameluke as he passes, who merely laughs. 'Wilt thou laugh, thou accursed one?' says the king, enraged; and draws his sword to decapitate him, when the Mameluke turns out to be Jasmine. She confesses her guilt; the light in the king's eyes becomes darkness, and he orders her to be put to the worst of deaths.

As he is grieving one day about having slain his daughter unjustly, Hafiz enters his room, and explains to him that Sittasalatin is yet alive, or, as the Arabs say, 'in the fetters of life.' Then they travel together from city to city until they come to a village, where in a mosque they find the princess, with her son beside her, instructing the people in the science of the stars and theology. The king rushes forward and embraces his daughter, who, having explained the matter to the bystanders, is with her son Ahmed conveyed in a travelling litter to Bosrah. Here

she is once more united to her husband, Kemaleddin, who is made Vizier, and they remain happy ever after.

Next in the Rich mss. is a story not unlike that of 'The Merchant and the Genie' in the popular version. But in this tale the genius is an aun or giant, and the cause of offence the killing of his son while in the shape of a serpent. This seems more in accordance with our notions of probability, in the realm of the improbable, than the killing, as in the old story, by the 'shell' of a date thrown by accident into the eye. Again, there are four intercessors instead of three, and every one, of course, asks for a fourth of the life of the merchant's son, on condition that he tells a story able, from its interest, to make the aun forget his own son's death. The first story is that of a marvellous well, which has the property of changing the sex of all those who drink of its waters. This is a well-known classical superatition. The fourth story seems little more than an imitation of those parts of the adventures of Sindbad where he falls in with the cannibal blacks, and where afterwards he meets with the 'white people gathering pepper,' whose weird custom it was to bury the husband alive with his deceased wife.

The second story runs thus: 'I,' said the second man, 'am a broker, and was for some time a bachelor, thinking an unmarried life to be less costly and more free from care. Now one day, while I was sitting in my house, some of my friends came to visit me, and, after a little talk, asked me how was it that I had never married, adding that the condition of marriage was more honourable and better than that of a single life. After they had spoken to me for a long while, and I saw that I

must return some sort of answer, I said, "My friends, I remain without a wife, because there is no good woman to be found." Then one of them said to me, "There, sir, you are wrong; I myself know of a woman who is in goodness a perfect saint, fasting by day and praying by night." Much more he said to this purpose, and at last, in an evil hour, he induced me to take her as my wife. Now, the day on which I married her chanced to be Friday, and when I came into her room I found her engaged in prayer; so I waited patiently till she had ended her devotions, whereupon she arose and prepared our dinner. When I had eaten as much as I desired, and had washed my hands, my wife came in to me with a cup of sugared sherbet, for which I thanked her, and, being thirsty, drank the whole of it. It was not long, however, before I felt a sensation of drowsiness, and, composing myself to sleep, slept without waking until the next morning.' The story-teller goes on to say that the same thing occurred for thirty nights in succession, and that the newly-married husband passed every night in the soundest of sleeps. One day, however, he was sitting 'in the gate of subsistence money'—that is to say, looking out for some work—when he fell into a doze, tired with vain expectation. An acquaintance who passed by, and saw him in this condition, cried out, 'Upon the leaf of the cucumber! He who watches by night sleeps by day,' and made other mocking remarks, implying that the broker had too much affection for his wife. The broker, upon this, showed his friend the true state of the case, and told him, with minute, not to say wearisome, particularity, everything that had occurred. This friend, whose

name was Maktub, having heard all he had to say, looked at him intently, as if to see whether he was speaking the truth. Having satisfied himself on this point, he put his hand in his pocket and took out of it a piece of sponge, and gave it to the broker, directing him, when his wife came to him that night as usual with the sugared sherbet, to let the drink fall on to the sponge instead of swallowing it; 'and,' he added, 'after this, pretend to fall into a sound sleep, and never move, whatever she may do to you; and you will have need of all your firmness and courage, I warn you beforehand. She will then leave you; but take care that you find some means of following her wherever she goes, and you will see something to surprise you more than anything you have yet seen.' The broker took his friend's advice, put the piece of sponge which Maktub had given him into his bosom, and, having paid a visit to the market to purchase a pound of meat, presently betook himself home. There he gave the meat to his wife to cook for dinner, and then went out for a little stroll, and returned in the evening. Not seeing any sign of dinner, he asked the reason. 'Ah, my husband,' said she, 'such a misfortune happened! While I turned aside for a moment, the cat stole the meat and ate it!' The husband was a little vexed, but said nothing, making his meal of a few cakes and some raisins. After this she came with the sherbet, which he emptied into the sponge, and soon was, to all appearance, sound asleep. The wife, having looked at him awhile, took out a nail from a cupboard in the wall, and heated it in the fire till it was red-hot. Then she approached the broker, and cried out, 'This sleep of yours is only

feigned,' and cauterised him in the soles of his feet; and all the while the wretched man lay without stirring. Then she went again to the cupboard, and took from a shelf a plate full of meat nicely browned, and some of the whitest bread, and descended to the ground-floor and entered a sort of outhouse. The husband followed her, and crept into an old barrel lying in the outhouse, to watch. After making a few preparations, the wife came up to this very barrel and sat upon it, with a whip of brass in her hand. Having muttered some magic words, she struck the barrel smartly with her whip, and cried, 'O barrel! bear me without delay to my heart's beloved and the fruit of my liver!' 'Immediately,' says the narrator, 'the barrel rose with us both, higher and higher, until we heard the angels hymning God in the orbits of the stars. After a while we descended, until we came to a place of a filthy stink, full of foulest impurity. Then the woman alighted from the barrel, and went into a house, where was a thick-lipped Moor, with long ears and a large nose, lying on his back asleep.' The remainder of this story need scarcely be translated, as it has many circumstances of resemblance to that of 'The History of the young King of the Black Isles,' and ends abruptly. The unsatisfied giant, or aun, raising his arm 'until one saw the black of his armpits,' is just about to keep his promise in a somewhat too literal fashion, by dividing the merchant's son into bits, and giving one bit to each of the tale-tellers, when a dust arises in the distance, and discovers a man riding on a mule, with forty maidens behind him beautiful like moons. This man begs, in his turn, a fourth of the life of the captive, on

the aforesaid condition, and tells the following tale :

Then said the man to the aun, "My story—and God is all-knowing—is that I am a baker, making bread before my oven ; and one day, while I was busy and fully occupied with my work, there came by me a Mughrabi, or African, having in his hands a goose in a small copper vessel. When he saw me he asked me to cook his goose for him, "and see," he added, "that it is nicely browned. If it be well done, I will pay you a piece of gold for your trouble." Now, when I had finished cooking it, the African gave me the gold, and asked me if I was willing to carry the goose to his house, saying that he would reward me, if I did this for him, with another piece of gold. I was overjoyed with this liberality, and told him I was ready to do what he wished at once. With that he bade me be quick and follow him. So I left my bakehouse, and ran behind him, happy with the thought of the two pieces of gold, and bearing the goose until we reached his house. Then he took the goose from me, and, having given me the gold he promised, asked me if I would come and dine with him. I was very willing to do so, and the goose made us two a very good dinner. After dinner, in the course of conversation, he asked me concerning my means of livelihood, and said, "I dare wager what you make out of your bakery is little enough !" Then I sighed, and answered him, "At the best I get but ten pieces of silver." "Well," said he, "I will give you five pieces of gold every day of your life if you will consent to come and take care of my mules." I told him I was quite prepared to do so, for so liberal a salary ; and got up at once and

went to the stable, and swept it out, and made it quite clean, and groomed the mules, and shook out for them into their mangers enough provender to last until after the time of evening prayer, and returned and told the African what I had done. Now, this was my occupation for some time, until one day he said to me, "Go into the stable, and set the pack-saddles on the mules, and bring them to me." So I did what he ordered me ; and he mounted on one mule, and I rode on another, and we drove the rest of the mules before us, and there were forty of them in all. Now, after we had ridden a pretty while, and had left the house of the African far behind us, we came to a river, which stopped our further progress. But the African, who had a little riding-whip with him, raised it without uttering a word, and smote the river ; and it rolled back on either side, leaving a path for us in the midst dry land. After that we journeyed on for some time, until we arrived at a high mountain. "We will go no further now," said the African ; "and take care to do exactly what I bid you." Then he alighted, and I alighted also, and we sat for a while beneath the mountain, what time he told me all that he expected me to do. Then he took forth from his pocket a china platter, and said, "Sit on this plate of china, and take heed that you move not, until I have completed my incantation. When I have finished, the plate will immediately rise with you in the air, and will continue ascending until it reaches the top of this mountain. When it arrives there, it will let you down gently, and return to me of its own accord. Now, as soon as it leaves you, lose no time, but gather the best of the many precious things you will



see around you, and throw them down to me, that I may lade the mules with them, and return at once; and take care not to mention the name of God." So I sat upon the china plate, and the African, having lighted a fire with some dry sticks, presently threw in some incense which he had about him, and spoke some words, which I could not understand. But as soon as he began to speak, the plate began to rise with me, and continued soaring up with me, until it left me at the mountain's top. Then I looked around me, and saw many strange and precious things, more than I could describe; and I commenced casting them down one after another, as quickly as I could, until I thought I had thrown to the African enough, and more than enough, for all his forty mules to carry. Now, while I was still gazing about, anxious to take away also some precious jewel for myself, I heard a voice, as from a distance or from behind a thick cloud, crying out to me, "This be the place of thy burial till thou meetest thy Lord!" Then I knew that the African had deceived me, and wept, when weeping was of no profit, and reproached myself, but to no purpose. So I remained sitting with my head on my hands, on the top of that mountain, until the dawn. And I was all alone, nor did I see any man who might comfort me by making the customary declaration of God's unity. Neither did I hear, "There is no god but God," nor any other sound in that mountain; and I myself was afraid, in consequence of what the deceitful African had said, to utter the sacred name.

When day broke, I took heart a little, and commenced to search the mountain on all sides, until at last I found the mark of a footstep, and another, and another.

So I followed these footsteps till they brought me to the hinder part of the mountain, which jutted forward abrupt and precipitous over a mighty chasm, and at the bottom of it I saw some black shapes moving. Straining my sight, I found them to be bodies of men, most of them lying prostrate, but a few here and there standing upright. All of these were hurt and mangled, some having their legs broken and some their heads, some dead, and some alive. Now, as soon as these spied me out at the top of the mountain, they cried out, "Woe unto thee! Surely this accursed heretic, this vile African, has brought thee to this place, as he brought us; and few of us indeed remain alive, but most are already dead with hunger and thirst. And now do thou likewise cast thyself down this precipice, that what has befallen us may happen also to thee." Then I cried out, forgetting in my dismay what the African, that cursed magician, had told me, "There is no strength nor power but in the great and high God!" and I looked to have seen the earth open and swallow me up, or for some other misfortune to happen to me, but nothing happened. Then I knew that it was a trick of the African to prevent my having recourse to the Great Helper. After that I prayed fervently, and a thought was put into my mind. I took off all my clothes, and fastened them one to another; and I had by chance with me a rope of hemp, a long one; and I fastened the end of my garments to this rope, and attached the end of the rope firmly to a large stone, and then let myself down gradually until there was left between me and the ground not more than twice the height of a man. Then I let go of the end of my garments, and dropped

safely upon my feet, and escaped scot-free; upon which I gave thanks to God for my preservation, and ran forward without stopping until I came to the river I have already mentioned.'

The tale is a long one in the original version, but the upshot of it all is that the African is induced by a trick of his last victim to ascend the mountain, where

he is left to perish in his turn by the 'worst of deaths.' The beautiful girls, who accompanied the baker, turn out to be the African's mules, into which he had transformed them. 'Carry us to our homes,' they cry with one accord to the happy baker, 'and may God reward thee with all good for what thou hast done to this accursed one!'

JAMES MEW.

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## NIRVÂNA.

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O WEARY soul, for ever shalt thou rest,  
 For evermore of dreamless slumber fain;  
 Nor knowing aught, nor caring, of the pain  
 Thy long-past uncomplaining years attest:  
 Rent is the dream of perfectest and best,  
 The fond illusion which thy youth might feign,  
 For ever. Hope and love and joy are slain,  
 And life stands bare, in misery confest.

What more awaits thee? Slumber sweet and still,  
 And eyes fast closed against the weight of tears,  
 And heart that beats not with imagined fears,  
 And folded hands, and unresisting will;  
 Dead to the weary waste of ceaseless ill,  
 And untormented by the passing years.

W. L. COURTNEY.

## BURIED ALIVE.

'WELCOME home, Alf, my boy!'

My brother grasped my hand as he said these words, and did not release it until he had led me up the time-honoured steps of our ancestral home, and begun to assist me to unfasten my great-coat.

'And how are you, my lad?' he continued, without giving me time to reply to his hearty reception. 'Why, you look as brown as a berry, and certainly none the worse for your fifteen years' nabobism.'

I had just returned to England, after having endured the trying climate of India for fifteen years, and had hastened at once to the old mansion where I had been born, and which was, at the time of my story, in the possession of my eldest brother Stephen. Our family bear the honoured name of Stanley, and are a younger branch of the noble house of that name. They had been settled for many centuries in a wild part of the North-west Riding of Yorkshire, upon an estate that was very beautiful from an artistic point of view, but very poor from a pecuniary aspect; and consequently many generations of younger sons had been forced to push their way in the world as I had. My half-brother Stephen was twelve years older than I was, and had always regarded me with an affection more fatherly than brotherly, delighting in giving me pet names; and even when years of foreign travel had tanned my originally fair complexion and silvered my hair, I was amused by the way in which, upon this our first meeting after

many years, he ignored the present, and kept up the old manners and sayings which had characterised him when I was a boy at Stanley House.

A substantial repast was provided for me in the old dining-room, and after I had done justice to it, and the gray-headed butler (who had officiated in my father's time) had brought in the wine, Stephen and I were soon deep in conversation on topics peculiarly interesting to me.

'So you think the old place is changed?' he said musingly, in reply to a remark that had fallen from me. 'I've not noticed it; but it may be, it may be.'

'Indeed it is, Stephen,' I said; 'and I think you are allowing the best part of the house to fall into decay. Now, in my father's day the west wing—'

'Hush!' he cried, interrupting me with a startled look in his eyes. 'Don't mention that, for Heaven's sake! *She* loved those rooms.'

In a moment I had grasped his hand.

'Forgive me, Stephen!' I exclaimed, as the terrible past flashed across my mind, and I saw I had opened an old wound.

'There is nothing to forgive, Alf, my boy,' he said, looking into the bright fire with an anxious, troubled face. 'You could not know of all the horror of that terrible time.'

Indeed I could not; for I was but a boy when I went to India. Nevertheless, I had heard sufficient whilst there of my brother's unfortunate marriage to convince

me of the pain which any allusion to it would give to him. I had heard how he had married a beautiful girl, and how fondly he had loved her, and how, after three months of married life, she had deserted him. With whom or whither she had gone, no one knew; and her name had become almost a forgotten sound at Stanley House.

I changed the subject of conversation, and tried to make him forget the unpleasant recollections which my words had raised, by relating some of the most amusing adventures that had befallen me whilst abroad; but, though he listened with interest, and seemed to try to shake off the gloom that had settled upon his mind, he never quite regained his wonted cheerfulness during the remainder of the evening, and retired early to rest, excusing himself by saying it was his custom.

Amongst the evils of civilisation which my somewhat stormy passage through life had taught me, that of late hours was by no means the smallest; and, knowing it would be useless for me to turn into bed before midnight, I put on my hat, lit another cigar, and strolled into the grounds to get a breath of fresh air.

It was a fine summer night. The moon was shining brightly from a clear starlit sky. I knew every foot of the ground, and visited many of my favourite haunts; and it must have been after eleven o'clock before I began to think of returning. My cigar had gone out when I reached the bottom of the long avenue of tall trees, and, beginning to feel chilly, I walked somewhat quickly towards the house, crunching the gravel beneath my feet as I went. As I drew near the front door my attention was attracted by the sudden appearance of a man bear-

ing a lantern, who had evidently heard my footsteps, for he stopped and awaited my approach. At first I thought he was one of the servants; but, upon drawing nearer, I was surprised to find it was my brother. I hastened to speak to him, when, to my great astonishment, after glancing at me eagerly, he turned away without any sign of recognition, and hurried rapidly in the direction of the deserted west wing. My first intention was to call out after him; but, upon second thought, I decided not to do so; for I was persuaded that he had seen and recognised me, and that perhaps my company might not be desired; so I entered the house, and was soon in bed and asleep.

The next morning, when I came down-stairs, I found Stephen already in the breakfast-room awaiting me. He was standing with his back to the fire.

'Good-morning, Alf,' he said, smiling in his cheerful manner. 'You are an exception to most lovers of late hours, I see.'

'Yes,' I replied; 'I sleep soundly, and therefore rise early.'

'You'll find the nights long and dull here, I'm afraid, after the excitement to which you've been accustomed.'

'O no, not at all,' I said. 'There are so many old associations about Stanley House that I think I shall never be dull here. Now, last night I strolled through the grounds, and did not return until close upon midnight.'

'These late hours seem to me to be a very stupid custom, and one which I could never cultivate. I think, my boy, that you would have been much wiser if you had turned in when I did, and slept until morning.'

'Why, I daresay I was in bed before you.'

'In bed before me?' he repeated, with a puzzled look. 'What do you mean?'

'I mean just what I say—that I was in bed and asleep before you were; unless you finish your rest and rise before twelve P.M.'

'You must be joking, Alf,' he said incredulously. 'I was in bed by nine o'clock, and was up this morning at six.'

'Surely you must be mistaken, Stephen; for I met you, or your double, at the top of the avenue last night as I was returning to the house.'

'Impossible!'

'Indeed, I did. I would have spoken to you, but you hurried away; and I thought you had seen me, and wished to be alone.'

'It could not have been me. I was never out of the house after seven o'clock.'

All that day I was haunted by the recollection of what I had seen on the previous night, and of my brother's denial. I had heard singular stories of Stephen being a somnambulist, before I had left England, and could not help wondering if he was still addicted to freaks of that kind; but as I had never seen him walk in his sleep, and as I had only half believed the tales I had been told, I was not inclined to accept this explanation as a solution of the problem. However, I was determined to solve the mystery.

As soon as all were in bed, therefore, on the night following that on which I had arrived at Stanley House, I again went out into the grounds, determined, if I met the mysterious person whom I had seen on the previous night, to follow him and discover who he was. The moon was shining fitfully from behind the stormy clouds that now and again obscured her disc, and a breeze of wind stirred and whistled in the

branches of the trees. I paced upon the grass beneath the tall elms that pointed their foliaged branches to the frowning sky. I had taken up my point of observation just in front of the west wing of the house, which had been so long shut up and left to fall into decay. So great indeed had been my brother's horror lest any portion of it should be touched by human foot, that not only had he boarded up every window and door that had communication without, but he had also caused to be built up every door that had given access from it to the main body of the building.

My head was full of thoughts of my boyhood, as I walked to and fro. I remembered many happy days spent in those rooms, for they had been my father's favourites; and it was without a pang of regret that I looked at them, deserted and ruinous, simply because a false woman had also loved them.

I had waited until past midnight, and had almost given up my quest as hopeless, and was about to return to the house, when I heard a footstep on the damp gravel walk approaching. I drew back into the shadow of the trees, and peered forth into the darkness, for at that moment a thick cloud shut out the light of the moon. Nearer and nearer the footstep came, and at length the glimmering of a lantern shone out on the darkness. The man bearing the light went up to the principal entrance of the west wing, where he paused, and a moment later I heard a key shoot back the heavy lock; the next instant the light and the man disappeared as the door closed behind them.

Animated and excited, I stepped quickly, but softly, across the gravel walk to the door, where

for a moment I paused and listened. A footstep was ascending the creaking staircase. I waited until I heard it on the second flight before I tried the door. I found it open, and entered softly, closing it behind me. Before proceeding further, I cautiously took off my boots, and then I ascended the cold clammy stairs, that smelt of the tomb.

From the second landing there opened a suite of apartments, which I remembered had been called the strong rooms, because they were in the very heart of the building, had few windows, and only one doorway for ingress or egress. The heavy oak door that opened into these rooms I found was ajar, and a bright light streamed out between the opening. To my great astonishment, when I entered this room, I heard voices in the apartment beyond. At first I was so amazed that I could not distinguish a single word that was spoken; but as I became calm, and after drawing close to the door of the room from which the sound proceeded, I distinctly heard a woman's voice, in tearful accents, saying,

'O, if you love me, deliver me from this place! What have I done that I should be forced to bear this punishment? Have I not loved with a true woman's love? Speak to me. Do not look at me with eyes so glassy that they seem to see not. Give me one word, that I may hear you as the same Stephen that you were before this fearful malady overtook you. Let me again see the light of heaven, and the faces of my friends.'

I crept softly nearer to the door, and got into a position from which I could partly distinguish the occupants of the room and their surroundings. It was a handsomely furnished apartment,

half boudoir, half drawing-room. Every luxury which the heart or brain could desire was scattered about in endless variety. In the centre of the floor stood my brother; but with such a strange, wicked, frenzied expression on his face, that, had I not known his features well, I should have thought it could not be he. Before him knelt a woman whose face was buried in her hands.

'You shall not leave me thus!' she cried, as he turned to go. 'I must, I will have my liberty!'

She had started to her feet, and ran to the door. But Stephen, still without any change in his fixed, staring countenance, seized her roughly by the arm, and pushed her from him, and walked quickly towards the door. I had hardly time to draw back into the shadow of a heavy curtain, when he entered the room where I was, and walked quickly across to the landing, closing this last door after him, and locking it. Thus I found myself also a prisoner. I heard his footstep descend the stairs, and then the sound died slowly away.

For a few moments I stood puzzled as to what course I should pursue. I knew it would be useless to attempt to force the massive lock, or when morning came to try to attract the outer world; for, as I have said, the rooms were strongly built and situated in the very heart of the west wing, and the few windows which had of yore let in the light of heaven to them had been filled up with strong masonry. I was aroused from my thoughts by a sob from the occupant of the next chamber. Going up to the door which Stephen had closed after him, I knocked, and then entered. My tap had evidently not been heard, for I found the graceful form seated in a chair, in an attitude



which betokened despair, her arms upon the table, her head leaning forward, and her beautiful dishevelled hair falling in waving folds about her.

'Madam.'

I had walked up to her, and placed my hand upon her shoulder.

'O!' And she turned towards me her pale, tearful, horror-stricken face, then shrank away in fear. 'Who are you? Pray do not hurt me. I know I am helpless.'

It was some time before I could convince her that I was really a friend; for so long had she been buried in these rooms that her mind had become almost unhinged, and her sense of perception blunted. By degrees, however, I made her understand who I was, and how I had come there; and then, in answer to my questions, I gleaned the history of her captivity.

When my brother married her she was a handsome young girl of eighteen, and he was verging on the period of middle age. For three months after their marriage he had been kind and attentive—all, in fact, that a wife could desire of her husband. Just at the end of that time, however, he discovered accidentally several letters, which had been written by her, before her marriage, to a former lover; and for some days afterwards he was moody, jealous, and strange in his conduct. One night he entered her room with that fixed, frenzied, wicked look upon his face which she had never seen there before, but which had marred his features in all her interviews with him since, and directed her by signs to follow him, a mandate which in her terror she readily obeyed. He conducted her to a gloomy chamber, lighted

only by a small oil-lamp, and then left her, locking the door behind him. At intervals, for some weeks afterwards, he visited her, bringing food and clothing with him; but always coming in the night, and bearing himself in a silent, changed, peculiar manner. At length he led her back again to her own suite of apartments (those in which I had discovered her), where, during her absence, all the windows had been built up, thus cutting off communication with the outer world. Here he had visited her almost every night since, bringing her the necessities of life, coming like an apparition, and going as he came.

'I think those foolish letters of mine,' she said, in conclusion, 'written before I had learned to love my husband, have turned his brain. I was warned before I married him that he was affected by the peculiar malady of sleep-walking, and that when under its influence he not only lost complete control over his reason, but also seemed to live a double life. When awake he was generous, frank, and good; but when in a somnambulant state, I was told, he was morose, jealous, wicked—in a word, insane; and that in his waking hours he had no recollection of what took place or what he did when in this latter state.'

Fortunately I found I had my powder-flask in my pocket, and thus was able to set myself and my unfortunate brother's wife at liberty, by exploding the locks.

I took my *protégée* to the rectory, where the rector, who was an old college friend of mine, was not a little surprised to receive such visitors at so early an hour.

Before returning to Stanley House, I rode on the rector's cob to my brother's doctor, who lived

about three miles away, and consulted him upon Stephen's sad condition. He told me that he was quite aware of the facts of the case, but that he had not for a moment thought the malady could have been capable of working so much mischief.

He suggested that in all probability a crisis in the disease would now be reached, brought about by the mental shock which the discovery of the escape of the captive would give when next the somnambulist visited the west wing. The result of this crisis would either leave him a hopeless maniac or completely cure him.

At the doctor's request I arranged to meet him the same night at twelve o'clock, in order to watch my brother's movements. I then rode back to the rectory, and from there proceeded at once to Stanley House.

After resting in my room for a short while, I came down-stairs, and found Stephen more cheerful and genial than usual, all unconscious, poor fellow, of the fate hanging over him.

At night my brother retired to rest at his usual time, and I went out into the grounds to meet the doctor, about an hour and a half afterwards. When I met him we proceeded to the west wing to-

gether, to watch the effect of the shock of discovery upon the patient. As soon as we reached the door, I saw that Stephen had been before us, for the door was ajar. With a heart that beat fast with my fears, I hurried into the house, and was about to run up-stairs, when I stumbled over some obstacle at the bottom. The doctor, who was following closely, carried a dark-lantern, and its light soon revealed to us the bleeding form of my unhappy brother.

'He is dead,' the doctor said, rising from his knees, after making a hasty examination of the body. 'In his frenzy he must have dashed himself down the stairs. Poor fellow! we have been too late to save him!'

\* \* \* \* \*

Five years have fled since that time. Stanley House has been newly painted and renovated, and again holds a happy bride and bridegroom. A fair face looks over my shoulder as I write, and drops a tear upon the paper that contains a history of her sorrows. But a smile flits about her lips as I kiss her; and we look out together upon the beautiful scene, in the midst of which stands our home, and forget the darkness of the past in the brightness of the future.

T. P. BROWNE.

## TWO LATITUDES.

### PART I. LATITUDE 51° NORTH.

#### CHAPTER I.

'But, Ralph, do you think, after all, we are right to let him go?' asked Mrs. Warburton of her nephew, as she anxiously watched her son slowly getting into the dog-cart with the caution of a chronic invalid.

'Yes, yes! Of course, yes! It will do him all the good in the world on a morning like this! I'll take care of him, never fear. Ta-ta, auntie! Don't worry yourself about us; we sha'n't be long. Back sharp to lunch; and a good basket of trout with us.'

And with the last words Ralph Warburton sprang to the seat beside his cousin, gathered up the reins, and drove away from the door-steps, where his uncle and aunt, Hugh's parents, were standing.

Broadholme, the Warburtons' place, had a good deal of ground about it. There was a fine beech wood, and a long reach of trout stream belonging to it; but somehow or another Ralph had taken a fancy to a little piece of the same stream three or four miles off. To him the Broadholme trout were as nothing compared to the Holmeside trout. When he went fishing, which was as many days in the week as he could contrive to get free, he always went after the Holmeside trout. He bragged all over the county of those trout, and the number of them he caught.

Broadholme used, when Hugh and Ralph were boys, to have a great white house in the classical

style of the Regency attached to it; indeed, there lingered a tradition that the Regent had once called there; and that visit had made the place so sacred that the owners had long hesitated about pulling down the sham Corinthian façade, because it had seemed so shocking to demolish a building once consecrated by the presence of Royalty. But modern good taste had won the day. The present Broadholme residence was as charming a Norman-Shaw house as was to be found for miles around it. It had the loveliest carved barge-boards, the quaintest gables, the most picturesque perpendicular planking, and was altogether quite a typical emblem of the homely but refined domesticity of its owners.

But a shadow lay upon the beautiful house. Hugh Warburton, the only child, the young man who had mounted the dog-cart so cautiously, was that shadow, as his robust cousin, who had not a parent left in this world, was just then the sunshine. That is, of course, before the two young men went out, and speaking of the usual state of things.

Mr. and Mrs. Warburton stood on the steps watching the trap as it rapidly passed through the long drive.

'Have we done right?' asked the mother. 'Isn't there a touch of east still in the wind? Is his coat thick enough?'

'O my dear, Ralph will take care of him. Do him good! do him good! Glad Ralph managed to get him out. Fine fellow,

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Ralph !' said the father, with a heartiness of speech he did not feel ; for inwardly he was frightfully jealous of his nephew's health and strength. It seemed to him a wrong both to himself and his son. Why should Ralph be so well, when Hugh—

The parents each knew what the other was feeling. With a heavy sigh they turned away, the one to her morning-room, the other to his stables. It was sad how each had avoided looking at the other.

As for the two young men, they were soon bowling along the high-road in fine style. The horse was strong and very fresh ; but Ralph liked a horse that took some driving. That, and the glorious May morning, and the knowledge that he was every minute nearing Holmeside, sent up his spirits until Hugh felt the contagion, and almost forgot his ill-health. His languid eyes grew bright, his cheeks flushed.

'A month of this weather would make a man of me yet,' said he.

'Just under the wall of Holmeside there's a jolly place for fishing,' said Ralph. 'If there's a ray of sunshine anywhere, it's sure to be there. And I want you to see her there. I've been wanting to show her to you for ever so long, only these beastly old east winds have been in the way so confoundedly. I say, you're warm enough, aren't you ?'

'Jolly !' returned Hugh gaily.

The roads were dry and dusty ; damp, cold, and winter seemed to have fled away for ever. The light air was half intoxicating. They left the trap in the village. Murray, the man, put it up at the Greyhound. They turned down by a little rustic bridge, and walked by the side of the Lutterbourn until—

'O, here we are !' cried Ralph.

'Here's the very sunniest nook on the whole stream. Blest if that bit of wall isn't quite hot !'

'Too much sun for fishing. You'll never get a bite in such water as that !' said Hugh. 'However, I'll have a cast and try, just for the fun of the thing.'

'The water here always suits me ; that's the beauty of it,' said Ralph, laughing. 'Now, have you got all you want ? All right, then. *I fish over that wall.*'

'What, among the apple-blossom ?' asked Hugh, looking up into his cousin's face, with his two luminous eyes, which always seemed unnaturally large, suddenly spreading as it were all over his face.

Ralph laughed, the colour rose up to the roots of his hair ; he turned away whistling—he had a very true and musical whistle—a well-known air from *Patience* : 'Prithee, pretty maiden,' &c. ; and he walked straight up to the wall, leaned both his arms on the top of it, and looked about among the lichen-covered stems of the old apple-trees in the orchard.

Now, if Ralph Warburton meant the words 'pretty maiden' to describe that object of his dreams who was at that very moment advancing towards him under a shower of fluttering pink blossoms a light breeze had displaced, no term could well be less appropriate.

Helen Beresford, of Holmeside, was not a merely 'pretty maiden,' with flaxen hair and speed-well eyes and a waist like a wasp's ; she was 'a daughter of the gods, divinely tall'—and, in fact, she was exactly the same height as Ralph, and he was not short for a man.

She was massive, too—a grand creature, liberally made in mind, body, but, alas ! not in estate, for she had not a penny, and she was

most beautifully 'indrawing.' She had a smooth brown head, O, so neat, so neat! smooth round features, in which nothing was awry; and she was clad in a close-fitting dress of thin dark cloth, with spotless linen collar and cuffs, and a large white straw hat with a great bunch of wallflowers on the brim. She was a superb creature; in the whole of her there was not, morally, mentally, physically, or sartorially (if one may use such a term for a woman's dress), one rag, tag, or untidy end. There was, in fact, a splendid organising brain in the broad, smooth, brown head; but yet she was not prim—very far from it. She came to meet him with free, glad steps, and a something of almost childlike tenderness in her blushing face and tremulous mouth.

'By Jove! by Jove! she is—' But words failed him. How could he express in any way what she was to him?

But they were not as yet actually engaged, only very nearly. The want of money—that root of all evil in these interesting cases—had something to do with this state of things. They were singularly alike in everything, far more alike than most brothers and sisters, and they were alike in this, too: they neither of them had parents, they neither of them had (speaking broadly) one penny-piece they could strictly call their own.

They shook hands over the orchard wall—that is to say, they did not *shake* hands, because she put out her hand, which was soft and round, but distinctly powerful, and he held it in both of his, while he said a good many things that need not be put down.

'Why, that is your cousin?' said she presently.

'Yes. It was so fine—he wanted so much to come out, poor fellow!

So I brought him down here to fish—else, you know, I could hardly have come myself, and until to-morrow would have been such an awful time.'

'Poor fellow! He looks happy, though!' said Helen, with her voice full of pity. She had the tenderest heart in the world.

'Come out and speak to him,' said Ralph; and by way of making her come out, he put both his hands on the low wall and vaulted over into the orchard.

'It's absurd to go out just yet, though,' said he, taking her arm (how large and round and smooth it felt even through her sleeve!): taking her arm as if he had a right both to it and her, they walked up and down among the apple-trees for a few minutes in silence.

'Helen,' he said presently very seriously, 'do we understand each other?'

'I suppose so,' she answered softly, and instantly began to tremble all over.

'Then it's only the question of the confounded tin,' he went on.

'I suppose so,' she repeated still more softly and nervously.

'Then we'd better tell granny? Yes, and Hugh?' he suggested.

'I suppose we'd better; or, perhaps, we'd better wait until—until we can see our way clearer.'

'This uncertainty is horrible,' began Ralph.

'It is very trying,' she murmured; 'still, we must be brave.'

'You're always brave, bless you!'

'No, I'm not.'

'Yes, you are; I wish I'd half your pluck.'

'That wouldn't be much.'

'But you can't think how repulsive it is to me—to—to—'

'To be poor? O, there are worse things than that!'

'No, no, it isn't that; it's—it's

the horrible knowledge that when that poor fellow goes—and he must go—I shall be my uncle's heir, and—well, then, of course, everything will be different. You can't think how dreadful it is to me to see him about. I often feel I can't stand it—I must go. If it hadn't been for you I would have gone. But he's so fond of me; he can't bear any one else about him. Don't wonder at it—they do look so heartbroken, it's enough to kill the poor fellow! And I'm fond of him too. I never had a brother, so I can't say what it feels like to have one, but I couldn't be fonder of a brother; and—but there, it's horrible to me—it really is! And I've been such an unlucky beggar too!

'Well, the luck will turn now; it can't go on forever, you know.'

'I'm an ungrateful brute for saying so, as it's won me you, Helen.'

Here fortunately there was another shower of apple-blossom, which shall be allowed to screen them for a few seconds.

'At any rate, up to the time of my knowing you, I was always such an unlucky beggar,' resumed Ralph. 'My uncle's been good to me, as uncles go—very different from a father and that sort of thing. When I was plucked for the Civil Service, I thought I'd like to learn tea.'

'Learn tea?' asked Helen.

'Yes, I was going out to Assam; then I came down here just for a few days to recruit—tea was such a frightful grind—and I found poor Hugh awfully bad, and he made no end of a fuss when I wanted to leave. My aunt and uncle were half out of their minds about him. "What's all the tea in the world compared to poor Hugh's comfort? If he wants you to stay, you must stay," they said; so I

hung on here. But of course it's the very thing I ought not to have done; though I don't know how it is, it's only just lately that anything has seemed to matter much. I'm afraid you'll find me—'

'No, I sha'n't,' said Helen. 'Ah, there's granny out on the lawn!'

'Shall we?' asked Ralph, slightly raising his eyebrows.

'Perhaps we'd better,' she faltered.

So they both went off and told granny, who, strange to say, was not in the least surprised to hear it.

'Well, to punish you for your wickedness, I shall keep you prisoner in my castle of Holmeside until after lunch,' said granny.

'O, but there's Hugh!' said Ralph.

'Well, we must keep him too,' said old Mrs. Beresford. 'Poor boy, bring him in at once, and let us give him something.'

'O, but I've promised to be back sharp to lunch, and the others will be frantic if we're late. Good heavens!' looking at his watch, 'we shall hardly do it as it is! Come, Helen, come. Good-bye, Mrs. Beresford.'

And the engaged couple hurried off. Just as they turned out of the orchard gate they saw Hugh coming towards them.

'Hugh, old fellow, I'm the happiest man in the world! We've settled it all up, haven't we, Helen? And she says she approves of you as a cousin.'

'Very good of her! I am sure I return the compliment a thousand-fold,' said Hugh; but he could not get through the sentence without a cough.

'Isn't it time to be going?' he asked presently, with another cough.

'Do come in and have something,' said Helen.



'Mrs. Beresford has asked me to stay,' said Ralph, beginning to waver between love and duty. 'But I don't see how we can manage it!' regretfully.'

'Why not?' said Hugh. 'Here's Murray. No, Ralph, you sha'n't come; I won't have you. I am quite capable of taking care of myself. This lovely day has done me no end of good. Good-bye, good-bye.'

And he turned away and walked off along the banks almost as briskly as if nothing were the matter with him.

They looked after him for a moment, then went towards the house arm in arm, talking happily. Ah, how happily, they were destined never to forget! But after they had repassed the orchard gate, they never gave another thought to Ralph's cousin Hugh.

## CHAPTER II.

Two hours of happiness; two hours of a present, so perfect, so exquisitely blissful, that it seemed to have neither past nor future. They stand alone, do those two hours, in the memory of a man and woman—unique, impossible to repeat; the beginning of their affianced life, the end.

But wait—wait! The swift-coming event threw no shadow on their hearts; why should we?

How vivid to them still are all the colours of the simple details of that first simple meal together! What pathos now lurks in each trivial remark, each touch of the hands, each blush, each smile, each lightly spoken word! It was the beginning, it was the end! Holmeside, old Mrs. Beresford's cottage, was a very small and modest residence, but it made up in charm, as far as Ralph War-

burton was concerned, what it lost in size: to him it was altogether perfect. The tiny drawing-room was half bow-window, all twined about with dark-stemmed jasmine and the tender young leaves of a climbing rose.

He and she sat in that bow-window very close together, and talked in whispers after lunch when granny had gone to take her nap. But they did not say very much; their great happiness had made them quieter. Across the little shrubbery one could see the high-road, but not much traffic passed; now and then a slowly moving farm wagon; five minutes after, a light gig. The window was wide open, rural sounds came in—the lowing of cattle, the quacking of geese from the homestead across the road, the chirping of sparrows among the bushes. In a long pause between their broken talk, the sound of a horse's hoofs in rapid motion reached them; it came nearer very swiftly; it arrested Ralph's ear. He turned sharply to the window; in another instant, 'Golightly,' the fastest horse in the Broadholme stables, was in sight. Murray was on him; they were tearing along the road at the very top of the thoroughbred's speed.

'Good God!' exclaimed Ralph, and dashed out of the room and through the shrubbery.

Murray pulled up short in front of the gate.

'What's amiss?' shouted Ralph, the man's face striking him with cold terror.

'Bad news, sir; bad news!' exclaimed Murray, shaking his head.

'Be quick! What's wrong?' cried Ralph.

'Mr. Hugh's just about killed himself!' said Murray. 'He would drive that great pulling brute; all I could say wouldn't stop him. You shouldn't have

left him, Mr. Ralph; he wouldn't mind me! But he's done for himself—broken a vessel the minute he put foot in the house. Best get back, sir, quick as you can, if you want to see him again. We've been tearing about for doctors. I've just been to the post-office with a telegram to a swell London physician; but I knew where you was, sir, so I thought I'd better give you a hint. The Squire's taking on awful!

'Here, I'll ride back "Golightly." You get something from the Greyhound,' said Ralph; then hurrying, pale as death, into the house,

'I must go! Good-bye! good-bye!' he cried wildly, stammered out the fatal news, kissed Helen once with white lips, mounted Golightly, and galloped back to Broadholme as fast as the horse would take him.

A couple of outdoor men were waiting about the Warburtons' house; neither spoke a word as they took his horse. He sprang up the steps and entered the quaint hall. His uncle was pacing up and down in a state of frenzy. He walked straight up to Ralph and shook his clenched fist in his face, crying, in a voice he was obliged to subdue,

'You've murdered my son! You've killed my boy! How dare you show your face in this room! I tell you, you've killed my boy!'

'Where is he?' asked Ralph wildly.

'What's that to you?' demanded the Squire. 'I tell you, you've murdered my son! You might have waited!' he added, with a bitter taunt; 'you'd nothave had long to wait! But you've overdone it, sir! You shall smart for it—by God, you shall!'

'Where is he?' repeated Ralph, trying to push past his uncle, and

too over-wrought for courtesy. 'Where is he?'

'What's that to you? Leave the house this moment!' stormed the maddened father. 'This roof can't cover both of us!'

He tried to bar the way; but Ralph was too much for him.

'He wants me!' he cried, under his breath, springing up the stairs.

'He wants no one now! Come back, I say; don't go a step further!'

'He wants me, and he shall have me!' returned Ralph.

'Come back, you sir! come back!' his uncle called after him, smothering his voice as best he could, but gesticulating with fury.

Ralph hurried on.

'Tell my aunt I'm here,' he whispered to a girl who was waiting outside Hugh's door.

She nodded slowly, lifting the corner of her apron to her eyes as she did so. In a moment or two Mrs. Warburton came to him.

'O Ralph! Ralph!' she cried, trying to stifle both her voice and her sobs; 'why did you leave him! O, you've killed him! you've killed my darling!'

'Does he want me?' asked Ralph, almost choking with emotion.

'O,' sobbed the mother, 'his poor eyes have been asking for you all the time, and you never came—you never came!'

'May I go to him now?' said Ralph huskily.

'Leave the house, sir! Am I the master of my own house or not?' exclaimed Mr. Warburton, who had followed his nephew upstairs, seizing Ralph's arm with a powerful grip. 'You dare go into my boy's room! You've murdered him, sir—murdered him!'

'O, don't! don't!' cried the wife, trying to separate the two men. 'Our darling needs him, dear; he must come!'

'Am I master here, I want to know?' demanded the husband.

'No, no; you're not master to-day!' said the wife, in wild agony. 'Death's master now! Dear, you must let him come with me, indeed you must! Come, Ralph; he wants you.'

Her husband turned sullenly and left the corridor.

'You won't mind him. He's too grief-stricken to be himself. Don't speak to Hugh, and don't—O, don't look frightened!'

They went softly into the darkened room. There was a still, marble face on the pillow—a marble hand on the quilt. Ralph took the chair by the bedside, and without a word placed his own strong hand over that cold frail one his cousin had no power to lift.

Hugh opened his eyes, let them rest on Ralph, and smiled faintly, as if he had at last found what he was seeking and was content; then he closed them again, and appeared to fall asleep.

In Hugh's eyes, in his faint smile, alone, of all things that had greeted him, there was no sign of reproachfulness; they broke poor Ralph down completely, although he sat there quietly hour after hour, as the day faded into night, and until the first flush of red touched the sky.

But before the dawning it was all over. Then Ralph rose from his watching and stole out of the house. The fair undulating English country was hidden by thick watery mists. It was to him as

if a drowned world, his world, lay beneath them. For him, wandering homeless, all had come to an end; except the consciousness that for ever the gnawing sense of guilt would never leave him.

Helen—was she drowned with all the rest? In the terrible freshness and newness of his remorse and despair he felt it was so—she, too, was gone. Yet, as if by instinct, he groped his way down to Holmeside—along by the broad highway—down through the wet banks of the Lutterbourn. It was so early still—he alone lived of all mankind. He wandered round and round, till first the farm-labourers came, and then the sounds of human work arose here and there, and the anvil rang in the village smithy. At last he was with her again: he hardly knew how it happened, she was in his arms, or he in hers.

'We must part—we must part for ever! I am not fit for you now! His face—I shall always see his face! I'm an outcast and a vagabond on the earth!'

But she clung to him; she would not let him go.

'Then so am I! It was the fault of both of us.'

'You cannot love me now, Helen.'

'Now, and for ever—for ever and a day!'

'I must hide myself at the world's end! You couldn't follow me so far!'

'To the world's end! ay, and to a mile beyond it!'

## PART II. LATITUDE 8° NORTH.

### CHAPTER I.

A *WAVELESS* sea, bluer than the bluest sapphire, on which float myriads of great white jelly-fish, faintly lapping a narrow belt of

golden sand; dense vegetation growing almost to the water's edge; gigantic cotton-trees, stately palms, slender cocoa nuts with wide-spreading tufts of feathery foliage and clusters of green fruit,

and broad-leaved bananas. Embedded in this ocean of verdure, innumerable round mud huts with pointed roofs of bamboo thatching, and tall square houses with corrugated iron gables, on which the tropical sun beats pitilessly; a West African town clustering around the feet of dark-wooded mountains under an exquisite opaline sky—lightness, brightness, heat; and the sun everywhere—and everywhere colour, pure and vivid as a tropical flower.

A verandah of one of those white houses—a wide verandah shaded from the blinding glare by hanging mats of woven grass; a young Englishman pacing restlessly up and down, now and then stopping to raise the matting and gaze impatiently seaward. The silence, when he stops and his footfall does not break it, is deathlike. He listens—listens—paces up and down in a growing fever of unrest—again touches the mat. Hark! At last the boom of the signal-gun! He drags back the blind, eagerly looks at the too well-known flagstaff; the flag is being run up—the mail is sighted. Then comes the worst of the waiting.

‘Good heavens! how she’s crawling!’ he exclaims, as he fixedly watches the steamer in the offing.

He has waited so long—so long patiently accepted a separation that was inevitable; now, with the steamer in sight, time seems insufferable. But it goes by—it goes by slowly, but it goes!

He leaves the house and the friends who are looking after him in the town—for his home is far away in the wilds—turns into a wide grass-grown street through which runs a pathway covered with penetrating red sand, and on which sheep, goats, pigs, and turkeys are getting their living,

hurries down to a little wharf, where he finds a huge Kroo-man with a blue tattoo-mark about half an inch wide running from the top of his black forehead to the tip of his nose, lolling half asleep in a large boat.

‘Bannah Will!’ he shouts, ‘make you get crew one time! Mail done come!’

In a few minutes after, great shouting of:

‘Hi! you Frying Pan! Hi! you Slap Jack! Hi! you Lahai! Hi! you Bottle of Beer!’

Bannah Will manages to collect his ‘boys,’ the Englishman jumps into the boat, the black giant pushes off, and away they pull from the shore, where they watch the steamer until they can see where she will anchor; for as there is no proper landing-place it is always uncertain where she may stop. But they are nearing the vessel every minute. After all—will *she* be there?

He strains his eyes, as he shades them with his hand. Now he can see the figures moving on the deck. After all—is *she* there? What if *she* is not? No, no, that would be too dreadful to happen! She must be there!

But to return to our narrative, and the sober past tense. Two years and a half before this, a fellow-countryman of Bannah Will, with his boys, had had the honour of bringing Ralph Warburton himself on shore when he first arrived on the West Coast. He had had a bad time of it, one way and another, ever since that fatal day when he had lingered among the English apple-trees with Helen Beresford. He had failed in a trust; he deserved to be punished—he did not deny it; he was as severe with himself as any man could be, but his punishment had been a hard one; still,

it had done him good—it had made a man of him.

He had dropped talking of such trifling tasks as he had had to perform in England as 'an awful grind.' He knew, he learned very soon after his arrival on the coast, that up to that time he had hardly done a good day's work in his life. He had been kicked out of his snug nest at Broadholme; he had been a good deal hurt by the fall; but he had started up pretty smartly, and, finding that he had to fight a way for himself and his Helen, not with the sword of his fathers, but with a five-foot rod for gauging palm-oil, he had grasped his weapon bravely, and done his best. After a couple of years' incessant toil, broken only by African fevers, he had returned to England to recruit his health.

He had not ventured so much as to look at Broadholme; but he had married Helen, stayed at Holmeside six weeks, and left her there with granny.

It had been a dreadful parting, worse even than the first one; but he had been firm.

'I can't let you be killed, Helen! Even for me you mustn't kill yourself!' And he had gone without her.

It was an awful wrench; but there was an epidemic among the Europeans; the death-rate after his return to the coast was fearful; he was thankful she was safe at home.

The epidemic spared him, however; it took the men above him; he had learned palm-oil and other African produce well; he could cope with the wily native; and so he found himself the manager of Yolaba Factory on the Bockeroo river, and began to cherish a vague hope he might one day be able to see his wife again.

One evening, just after he had

taken the oversight of Yolaba, he was sitting on the verandah in the bright moonlight alone, watching a great snake slowly gliding across the enclosure in front of his dwelling.

He was the only Englishman within many miles. He was tired, ill, depressed, craving for some one to speak to, thinking as he watched the creature of the man who had been there before him and had blown out his brains for want of society, of many others he knew driven to desperation by the deadly stillness and solitude, and wondering whether he himself would at last fall a victim to suicidal mania, when in came one of his men.

'Book done come, sir!'

'Book' proved to be a long letter from Helen; it had a black border. The sight made him tremble—his nerves were always in a frightful state out there—but it was in her hand. It covered many pages of thin paper, but the gist of it was this:

'My Dearest,—I am coming. You cannot stop me now. I shall have started before this reaches you. Poor granny's little annuity died with her; but the trifle she was able to save will just pay for my outfit and passage. I leave by the Gonda on the 18th November.'

It was the Gonda towards which Bannah Will and his crew pulled Ralph Warburton across the sapphire sea, that washed the shore of the African town clustered around the base of the dark mountains; that town was a hundred and fifty miles from Ralph's new home.

Well, Bannah Will pulled about and watched the steamer; they came nearer and nearer; Ralph suddenly felt his heart all but jumping out of his body.

There she was on the deck—there was his Helen!

'Hi! de missis done come! de missis done come!' shouted Bannah Will gleefully, as he saw Warburton waving his hat with all his might.

'Yes!' cried Warburton wildly, 'de missis done come! de missis done come for true!'

O, but the bobbing up and down in that boat! The seeing each other, the waving, the signalling, the not being able to stop!

But at last—ah, well!

Yet somehow there was an element of matter-of-factness about it that was incongruous, almost laughable. Luggage and that sort of thing would jostle up against the other sort of thing, you know; and there was so much to do, so much to see, such a lot of people to say 'good-bye' to, so many to say 'how do you do?' to; such a strange new country, such a kind open-hearted hospitality within the square white house that rose among the verdure of the town, such sympathy,—for out there, who does not know the anguish of parting, the bliss of meeting!—such—in fact, it was all a bewilderment of delight to Helen, in spite of the overpowering heat and the glare everywhere.

'But we're not at home yet, darling, you know,' said Ralph.

'Home!' said Helen. 'How strange it seems to have a home that is not in England!'

'Well,' said he, with a shrug of the shoulders, 'of course it isn't really home—that is, it hasn't been yet; but it's going to be different now de missis done come!'

'Holmeside never seemed like home to me after you were gone,' said Helen. 'So I came to the conclusion that where you were must be home. Do you feel—I

mean, I suppose you are glad I've come?'

'Glad! If you knew the tortures of loneliness I've endured, you'd wonder I was here to meet you—that's all.'

'Poor old man!' said Helen; and she gave him a look which, not being able to stand, he interrupted in the proper way, there being no one about just then.

They had to do a hundred and fifty miles in an open boat before they could call themselves at home; so after two or three days 'in town,' Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Warburton said good-bye to even such vestiges of European life as were to be found there, and set out for the lonely factory on the far-distant Bockeroo river.

Bannah Will, who had brought Ralph Warburton up to town, took him and his wife down to the Bockeroo. Bannah Will was the captain of a crew of eight; their names were Frying Pan, Bottle of Beer, Lahai, George, One Copper, Le Fevre, Slap Jack, and Kong. There was not a ripple on the sea, not a breath of wind; the boys had to pull all day, and required a good deal of talking to.

But it was pleasant to the young husband and wife sitting under the thick black awning, which, by the way, had been meant for the rains; and when the blazing sun had gone down, Helen fell fast asleep on a mattress; it was her first real sleep since she had left England; it was delicious.

After three days in the boat, and two nights spent—one at a mission station on the coast, and the other on a small island, where they were the only Europeans—they left the open sea, and pulled a few miles up the wide mouth of the Bockeroo river, under a brilliant moonlight, until pre-



sently the monotonous dip of the oars ceased to break the deathlike silence before a narrow wharf, behind which was distinctly visible a long white building, with a verandah running the entire length of it.

How still! how utterly lonely it all was! Not a creature to be seen, not a sound heard, no light; no trace of any human being! Surely it must be more than a mile beyond the world's end!

'How's this!' cried Ralph angrily. 'No one about! Where's the watchman?'

'Rope-yarn!' he shouted. 'Rope-yarn!' he repeated several times at the top of his voice; and a minute or two afterwards, a light moved slowly down to the water's edge.

'Here, Bannah Will, make you carry the missis!' continued Ralph.

There was something in the tone of command in which her husband gave his orders that was quite new to Helen—new, but pleasing. A wife naturally likes to see her husband a man in authority, provided always he does not try that authority on herself.

'Hi, you Bottle of Peer, make you come help carry de missis!' Bannah Will shouted in his turn; and together they managed to lift Helen through the shallow water, and then returned to fetch her husband.

'Is that our home, Ralph?' asked Helen, as soon as he was within speaking distance.

'No, darling; that's the store. Here, Rope-yarn, make you show the house one time!'

Rope-yarn, holding his lantern close to the ground, for fear of treading on a snake, went before them, up a rough path, across a bit of country road, and entered,

by rough wooden gates, a wide enclosed space, within which was another long white building. Through the yard, up a flight of brick steps, went Rope-yarn and the young married couple. On the verandah, Ralph dismissed the man.

'Now, my love,' he said, and together they entered a great bare room. He turned and kissed her. 'Our new home, Helen. Welcome to Yolaba!'

'At last!' she said, with a sigh of content, clinging to him for one instant before she looked around.

'At last!' he echoed. 'And not much to see now you've got here!' he went on presently, altering his tone.

There was the great bare room—eight windows, through which the brilliant moonlight was pouring; four doors; two cane chairs; a well-worn English dining-table; a sofa; two packing-cases from Whiteley's.

'You're not over-furnished, my dear!' said Helen. 'But never mind; there's *you*!'

'And you!'

'But this will never do!'

'Won't it?'

'No; there are the cases to unpack. You've never seen me yet as a woman of business, you know.'

'You don't mean to say you're going to do that to-night?'

'I am, though!'

'De missis done come! De missis done come! De missis done come for true!' And Ralph struck up a wild native chant to these words, which he gave 'country fashion,' *con amore, con gusto, con molto sentimento*, just as the fancy took him.

Those cases were unpacked that night. It was as well, perhaps, that Helen had managed a long and delicious sleep in the open

boat, because mosquitoes, sand-flies, intense heat, the ringing of the watchman's bell every hour, and Ralph's perpetual shouting out of window to Rope-yarn (that Rope-yarn whose known inattention to duty haunted poor Ralph even in his deepest dreams) formed a combination of horrors that made night dreadful.

At half-past five they were again in the long bare room, and Ralph was saying,

'Now, Helen, now come and look at your new home! Come on to the verandah.'

She followed him, and then stood speechless for a while, taking in the utter loveliness of the scene.

This is what she saw: a broad river; far off in the distance the sea, its breakers sparkling like silver. Near at hand, the path, by which she had come last night, she now saw bordered on each side by a hedge covered with pink blossoms, over which countless humming-birds, more brilliant than jewels, were hovering, their tiny bodies quivering and sparkling in the sun as they sucked the honey through their long straight beaks. A bread-nut tree, with large shiny dark-green leaves, all but looked in at the young English couple on the verandah, and palms were everywhere; and everywhere the busy little rice-birds, gorgeous in black-and-yellow velvet, were stripping the green off the broad palm-leaves, chatter, chatter, chattering incessantly. A solitary cocoa-nut tree watched over a cemented duck-pond in one corner of the enclosed space in front of the house; in another a group of glossy black-skinned girls, with gleaming white teeth, were drawing water at a thatched-roofed well, laughing and talking as if life were the greatest joke in the world.

'How do you like it now, Helen?' asked Ralph, who had been gazing, not at the scenery, but at his wife's rapt face.

'It can't be real!' she murmured dreamily.

'It *is* good to look at, isn't it?' said Ralph.

'Surely it can't be as unhealthy as you say! It's too lovely—it's too lovely even to be real!'

'Then you're not sorry you've come?' he asked.

She put out her hand; he took it.

'I'd like to kiss you for that,' he said fondly. 'But those girls can see us. We always have to be setting examples here. Well, now, there's housekeeping beginning. Here comes your fish-monger.'

A boy, attired in a red cotton handkerchief, came up the path, carrying a bunch of brilliant fish, just caught, and treaded on a piece of grass. A minute after, the native cook came in.

'Boy done bring fish; say eight copper, sar!'

'Here, Helen, give him fourpence; I'm going to turn all this sort of thing over to you,' said Ralph; and then, looking again towards the yard, 'Ah,' he exclaimed, 'here comes a particular pet of mine!'

A little tot of a girl, in a loose blue and white muslin garment, and coral earrings in her baby ears, the prettiest little black creature imaginable, was coming towards the house, poising a great water-melon on her woolly head.

'The sweet little thing!' cried Helen. 'Call her up. Do let me hear you speak to her.'

Ralph called her.

'Good-morning, sar. Good-morning, marm. Me mammy say six copper, sar,' piped the most musical voice in the world.

'What a darling! Threepence to pay, Ralph.'

Further conversation was prevented by the resonant tones of the factory gong. Ralph drank off the cup of tea that had been waiting for him.

'Well, dear, we must part until eleven o'clock; so *au revoir*, as we say in the Classics.'

Simple details these; but it was Helen's first morning on the Bockeroo river. They were impressed on her heart for ever.

At eleven Ralph came in, vigorously mopping his face.

'By Jove! by Jove!' he exclaimed, as he caught sight of his wife arrayed in a loose princess robe of cool white batiste, the wide sleeves showing her smooth firm arms. 'O, I say! By Jove!'

It was his method of expressing astonishment and admiration.

Certainly if Helen Beresford in her serge among the apple-blossoms of Holmeside had looked a grand creature, Helen Warburton at Yolaba in her white robe was grander.

'And what a breakfast-table! A whole set of china, I'll declare! Now I begin to understand the expression, "A woman of faculty."''

Helen smiled: it is so nice to be praised by a husband—a fact that is sometimes forgotten. She smiled, took his hot hand, and led him to an object covered by a shining damask cloth.

'Guess!' she said mysteriously.

'Couldn't! My brains won't run to so much excitement,' said he, sinking into a chair.

'I must help you, then. What is this?'

'Holly, by Jove! You don't mean to say—but no; don't tell me till after breakfast, and I'm strong enough to bear it. You don't mean to tell me—I'll declare, next Wednesday's Christmas Day! So it is! I know, I

know! It's our Christmas pudding! That's what it is! I've guessed!'

How happy they were in those early days at Yolaba, in spite of heat, sand-flies, Rope-yarn, and ten thousand worries, and, on Ralph's part, hard work from six in the morning to five in the evening, and long hours of loneliness on Helen's! How happy those early days at Yolaba were to both of them!

## CHAPTER II.

'HERE's a pretty go!' ejaculated Ralph, as he came in to breakfast one morning, scowling furiously, and mopping his face more vigorously than ever. 'Here's Jackson, my only Englishman, down with fever! Heaven knows what I'm to do among that pack of thieving rascals. I can't keep my eye on them all; I have to be all over the place. There'll be fine plundering,' and Ralph began to nibble at his lips and moustache, as his manner was when overwrought and nervous.

'Who is looking after Jackson?' asked Helen, as she handed her husband the tea he so greatly needed.

'Black nurse,' said Ralph. 'First-rate; never leaves the patient an instant; but what I'm to do without him Heaven knows, I don't.'

'What is it you want done, Ralph? I mean, what is it that's most particular?'

'O, I want somebody with an eye,' cried Ralph moodily. 'It was hotter than ever that morning.'

'An eye! I have two—at your service, if they can be of any use to you,' said Helen, with that admirable coolness of hers.

'O, I can't take you in there,' groaned Ralph.

'Should I be of the slightest use?' asked Helen.

'Why, of course! What a question!'

'Vei, well; then I shall come.'

'Well, you are a brick! But I don't like it.'

'Just the thing I shall enjoy.'

Bless you, Ralph, you don't know me even yet as a woman of business! I feel I've heaps of unexpended energy still left.'

'Energy! How can any one who isn't a salamander have a scrap of energy in this furnace?' groaned Ralph, letting his arms fall limply on each side of his Madeira chair.

'Still, the place must be driven,' put in Helen.

'Con-con-con-found it, yes!'

Half an hour later Helen was on her way to the factory, 'factory' being the local term for 'store.'

A number of native canoes were drawn up near the wharf. A negro was sleeping by the water's edge, with the rope that held his boat tied to his toe. In the various sheds palm-oil was being measured, and other native produce being collected and weighed.

Helen went up a flight of steps into an enormous room, very well built. Through the room ran a long counter, at the back of which were rows of shelves displaying Madras handkerchiefs, bright prints, blue baft, crockery, tobacco, tinned provisions, tools, beads, and indeed, to quote Ralph, 'everything from a needle to an anchor.' As the store had not long been reopened, it was just then very popular with the natives. It was crowded all day long.

'What a din! Shall I ever be able to hear myself think?' said Helen to herself, as she paused bewildered.

The noise was frightful; the room filled with people from all

sorts of out-of-the-way places on the neighbouring rivers, all chattering, all wanting to be served at once. The heat was overpowering; and the odour—paugh! A hundred glittering pairs of eyes were turned on the tall white woman in her sweeping robes.

Mutterings ran through the crowd:

'Hi, daddy, de missus done come! Hi, mammy, de missus done come one time! De missus fine woman for true!'

That clear organising brain of hers soon made order out of chaos. In a very short time Helen found that she had three things to do—to keep an eye that nothing was stolen, to write out 'good-notes' or orders for the native traders, who sold palm-oil or palm-nuts down-stairs and bought blue baft or Madras handkerchiefs up-stairs, and to 'look after the pieces' generally.

She did it well. She liked it. It was singularly congenial to her; and, above all, it was invaluable to Ralph, who seemed compensated for all his troubles whenever he snatched a hasty glance at her neat brown head and white-robed figure.

The Englishman, Jackson, got well; but still Helen kept her post at the desk, and still her watchful eye held the wildest native in awe.

So Ralph and Helen worked together until one afternoon, when, there happening to be a comparative lull in business, Helen left the desk, and took a chair in the doorway, between her husband's private office and the store. She had another chair in front of her, over which was thrown a gay-coloured scarf, such as they sold to the natives for body-scarves; and Helen, who always must have her hands busy, was ravelling out the ends to make the fringe,

while she kept an eye to things in general, when she felt a slight pain across the brows. It was very slight, but it was peculiar.

'Fever!' she said; and she laid down her work at once.

At once—and for ever. She left the half-fringed scarf hanging over the back of the chair, and crossed the floor to her husband, who was at the desk in the middle of the room.

'There's such a curious pain across here,' she said, putting her hand just above her eyes.

Ralph looked up at her; his face changed, his heart sank.

'I daren't leave. Jackson must stay down in the palm-oil shed. Go up to the house at once. Get some hot tea. Lie down. Pile on all your thickest things,' he said hurriedly.

She went away alone, through the burning glare of the sunshine; but she was shivering with icy coldness when she reached the house. Burning heat succeeded the cold. She was down with fever.

It was a terrible attack. She grew worse and worse. She suffered horrors unimaginable by those who have never gone through them. Ralph was half mad with dread; he knew only too well how critical her state was; but the inexorable factory had to be driven all the same. It was most distressing to leave her; but business would not stop because Ralph Warburton's wife was hovering between life and death. They neither of them ever knew how they managed to live through the next few days.

The fever subsided; but the weakness that followed was almost more appalling. She could do nothing but cry by the hour together from sheer prostration. Then to make things worse, if

possible, a series of tornadoes ushered in all the miseries of the rainy season. There would be a dead calm, then a tempest of wind; thunder bursting over the corrugated iron roof with a deafening rattle and din; blinding lightnings never ceasing; then a deluge of rain, rain, rain, day and night; everything in the house clammy; a gray mist over the river and whole face of the country; Ralph going about in waterproof boots up to his knees, and a mackintosh coat; Helen sitting over a pot of live charcoal, wrapped up in a thick flannel dressing-gown and an old sealskin jacket, all alone. The fever hung about her; she tried her hardest to shake it off; but it was too much for her. There were no dainties to tempt her to eat, nothing but tough fowls day after day.

One evening when Ralph came in, Helen was lying on the sofa weeping piteously, and too weak even to turn to welcome him. He tried to comfort her, to rouse her, to get her to take something; but all in vain. He was in despair; she seemed sinking before his eyes. He could not stand it; an hour afterwards he was down with fever himself. That attack—it was a bad one while it lasted—probably saved his wife's life. In her terror for him she shook off her own illness, until he partially recovered.

One evening about five o'clock, Ralph, who had just managed to drag himself about the factory all day, came in quite done up, more dead than alive, and sat down in the verandah by Helen's side.

It was a fine evening. Helen had been sitting there for some time, watching the line of silver breakers far off at the river's mouth, the big tears streaming slowly down her face as she looked at them. They seemed, that dis-

tant open sea seemed, to her the only way back to civilization, to England, to home. She dried up her tears as well as she could when she saw her husband coming; but her eyes would keep brimming over; she was so weak, so home-sick; and so was he.

'O, those two hours at Holme-side—what have they done for us!' Ralph groaned. 'Shall we scrape all together, and go back and starve?'

Ralph now had the most melancholy way of putting things. Helen broke into a hopeless fit of bitter weeping. Before she could sob out an answer the black cook appeared.

'We no got noting for dinner, marm.'

'What, not even a fowl?' asked Ralph.

'He done finish, sar.'

There was a dead silence after this announcement. Out of doors all was still; even Helen had ceased sobbing for an instant.

Suddenly Ralph bent forward, as if listening eagerly, holding up his hand to keep the black man from uttering another word. He listened—far off, from miles and miles away down the river, came stealing, only to be distinguished by the practised ear, the peculiar chant of a native canoe crew.

Nearer it came—soft, musical, plaintive, mellowed by the distance and the clear air—nearer and

nearer. Ralph seized his telescope and watched the horizon.

'It's the boat with the letters!' he exclaimed.

It stopped presently at the little landing-stage; the head-man of the crew brought up a japanned tin box. It held letters and papers.

A letter from England; another letter with a deep black border. It was from Ralph's aunt: it was kind, but heart-broken. His uncle was dead. He died forgiving him. Broadholme was Ralph's; and so was the money the letter contained.

A fortnight later, Bannah Will and his crew pulled Ralph and his wife back to the town that clusters round the base of the wooded mountains, but not, this time, over a smooth and waveless sea. As they stepped on to the deck of the English steamer,

'O!' cried Helen fervently, 'let me kiss the boards!'

But the bright sun came out again; the lovely West Coast looked lovelier than ever.

'After all,' said Helen, as she and her husband stood side by side gazing on the receding shore, 'after all, it is very, very beautiful!'

'Especially when seen from the deck of a homeward-bound steamer!' said Ralph, as if concluding his wife's sentence.

LIZZIE ALLDRIDGE.



## THE OLD BOOKSTALL.

*The Story of Christiana Davis, 'The British Amazon.'*

IN 1739 Christiana Davis, an out-pensioner of Chelsea College, died, and was interred with military honours in the pensioners' burying-ground. She was the daughter of a soldier in the Inniskilling Regiment, now the 6th Dragoons, who, disguising her sex, enlisted in the 2nd Dragoons, so well known as the Scots Greys. Her adventures were published, about the time of her death, in a pamphlet, of which a copy may be seen in the British Museum, and which is quaintly called :

'The Life and Adventures of Mrs. Christiana Davis, the British Amazon, commonly called Mother Ross ; who served as a Foot-soldier, and Dragoon, in several campaigns, under King William and the late Duke of Marlborough ; containing Variety of Transactions, both serious and diverting : Wherein she gave surprising Proofs of Courage, Strength, and Dexterity in handling all Sorts of Weopons, rarely to be met with in the contrary Sex ; For which, besides being otherwise rewarded, she was made a Pensioner of Chelsea College by Queen Anne, where her Husband now is a Sergeant, and she continued to her Death. The whole taken from her own Mouth, and known to be true by Many Noblemen, Generals, and other Officers, &c., mentioned in her Life, and still Living, who served in those Wars at the same Time, and were Witnesses of her uncommon Martial Bravery.'

This wonderful woman was born in Dublin in 1667, where her

father was known and highly respected as a brewer and maltster. He took up arms in the cause of King James II. ; and one Sunday, in his absence, his daughter, while at home, heard that the church to which her mother had gone was surrounded by a mob of Papists, who had blocked up the doorways, and were threatening violence to the congregation. She at once sallied forth, and, armed with a spit from the kitchen, fought her way to her mother, and carried her off, wounding a sergeant who attacked her, by thrusting the spit through the calf of his leg. Soon after the battle of the Boyne, at which the Irish loyalists were routed, a pardon was obtained for her father ; but all his property and effects, which had been confiscated, were lost, and Christiana was received into the house of her aunt, who kept a tavern, and, dying, left the business to her. Christiana married a man named Richard Walsh, whom she first began to woo by the aid of a female friend. He made her an excellent husband, and she lived with him very happily until he was enticed on board a vessel full of pressed men and recruits, and compelled to enlist into Lord Orrery's regiment of foot, now 1st Royals. His distressed wife had one child, and was then on the eve of giving birth to another. As soon as she could leave her baby she sent the elder child to her mother, put the infant out to nurse, and put in force a wild

strange scheme whereby she hoped to discover and rejoin her lost partner. She cut her hair short, put on her husband's clothes, and, knowing that Ensign Lawrence was beating up for recruits at the Golden Last, tendered herself as a volunteer, and, under the name of Christopher Walsh, was enlisted into a regiment commanded by the Marquis de Pisare. Under that officer she joined the Grand Army, and fought at the battle of Landen, where she was wounded in the ankle. Describing the effect of her first battle, she said: 'When I heard the cannon play, and the small shot rattle about me, they at first threw me into a sort of panic, having not been used to such rough music.' Before her wound was healed she was, with others, taken prisoner by the French, who made overtures to her to fight under the French colours, as others of her country were fighting. She refused, and, after nine days' captivity, was exchanged, and returned to her regiment. While a prisoner she recognised amongst the French officers one of her cousins, Captain Cavanaugh.

One of the 'diverting' incidents of her career about that time was that of a burgher's daughter falling in love with her. This caused jealousy in the breast of a rival, a sergeant of her regiment, and ended tragically enough in a duel, she resenting an insult he had given to the young lady, and the sergeant being, as was supposed, mortally wounded. For this offence Christiana was imprisoned until the father of the insulted lady, using his private influence, succeeded in obtaining her release, arrears of pay, and her discharge. To escape the entanglement of this love affair, she professed herself too fond and proud to make

the young lady the wife of a common soldier, saying she had 'as much honour as a general,' and when she had won a commission she would return to claim her bride.

She afterwards joined the 2nd Scots Greys, then Lord Hay's Dragoons, and in 1695 was present at the siege of Namur. After the peace of Ryswick the regiment was reduced, and she received her discharge. Making her way to Dublin, she found that none of her friends recognised her, and, being unable to support, did not claim, her children, or make herself known. On the rebreaking out of the war she reënlisted in her old dragoon corps, and fought at Nimequen, at the siege of Venloo, and at Liège. In the second attack at Schellenberg she was shot in the hip, but the ball was never extracted. While she was in hospital her sex was more than once in great danger of discovery. After the battle of Blenheim, being appointed guard over some prisoners, for the first time since her departure from Dublin, she saw her husband—making love to a Dutch-woman! She found he was serving in Orkney's regiment, and made herself known to him, reproaching him with faithlessness, but freely forgiving him, and telling his comrades that she was his brother. On the termination of the war she gave him a piece of gold, and, declining to resume her character as a woman and a wife, bade him adieu.

An odd incident in her career was her being compelled to pay for the support of an infant of which she was pronounced the father!

In Holland more than one girl fell in love with 'the pretty dragoon,' as her comrades called her.

At last, at the battle of Ramil-

lies, and just at its close, her skull being fractured by a ball, her sex was discovered. She was trepanned, and in ten weeks had recovered; but she was not allowed to reassume her male costume. Lord John Hay promised that she should never want. Brigadier Preston bought her a handsome silk gown. She was induced to receive her husband back; the marriage ceremony was reenacted; and all the officers of her regiment were present at a very merry frolicsome wedding-feast, every man present laughingly giving a kiss to the martial bride, and the old practice of 'throwing the stocking' was not omitted.

She followed the regiment as sutler, and acted occasionally as spy; and at the siege of Ath she snatched the piece of a fallen soldier, and killed an enemy who was in the very act of firing at her, at the same time receiving a musket-shot from the town, which split her lower lip, damaged her teeth, and knocked her down, but without doing more serious mischief. Her husband ran to her, thinking she was dead, when she spat out into her hand a tooth and the ball! In Ghent her husband again met the Dutch-woman he had before been making love to, and so moved his terrible wife's jealousy and passion that she cut off her rival's nose in the alehouse where she found them together. For this offence her husband, not herself, received punishment! She was so useful that her services could not be spared! At the siege of Ghent she wanted to accompany her husband as one of the forlorn hope, but Colonel Hamilton refused her permission. Despite that, she contrived to meet her husband on the road, and gave him a bottle of brandy. He was killed at the battle of Malplaquet;

and she, finding his body being stripped, drove off the robber, and was passionately weeping over his corpse when Captain Ross saw her, and was so tender and fervent in his expressions of sympathy that it became a joke afterwards to call her Madame Ross.

She conveyed her husband's remains from the battlefield across a mare, herself dug a grave for them, and, maddened by grief, would have cast herself into it had she not been prevented.

A curious anecdote is related of a dog then in her possession. This animal, so long as they were within reach of the grave, would remain upon it; but on her approach would retreat, and assume a place in the rear of the regiment which she had occupied to be near her husband.

Eleven weeks after the death of her husband she married a grenadier named Hugh Jones, who was severely wounded at the siege of St. Venant, when, to cover him from the cold, she stripped herself to her stays. His comrades bore him to the trench, and, after lingering about ten weeks, he died. She was then *enciente*; and, after the peace, Queen Anne promised her a pension, and said if her baby should prove a boy and grow up, she would give him a commission: it proved, however, to be a girl, greatly to the warlike mother's disappointment. Her third and last husband was again a soldier, named Davis, who had served in the 1st Regiment of Foot, and at the date of his marriage was in the Welsh Fusiliers. The Queen gave 'Moll Davis' a pension of a shilling a day; but, after her Majesty's death, the Lord Treasurer Oxford reduced it to fivepence, which Mr. Craigs induced the King to increase to the original sum. She lived for some time in the Willow Walk, Tot hil

(or 'Tuttle') Fields, Westminster, where she kept a little pie-house and tavern, from the profits of which she bought her husband's discharge, nursed him through a severe illness when she was herself suffering from a complication of serious and painful disorders,

and died, from a cold taken while waiting upon him at night, on July 7th, 1739.

We read that she marched in the grand funeral procession of the Duke of Marlborough, 'with,' as she said, 'a heavy heart and streaming eyes.' A. H. WALL.

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## ROSES.

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Roses in the land again !  
 Roses brighten all the lane !  
 As we wander to and fro,  
 Other roses sweeter grow.  
 Roses in the hedge, the ground,  
 Roses in your cheeks are found.

Roses were in bloom last year,  
 When I plucked a rosebud here ;  
 For to tell my love I chose  
 Thine own flower—a blushing rose.  
 Roses whispered, 'She is true,'  
 When I plighted troth to you.

They are gone—the roses sere,  
 Faded ere the blighting year ;  
 But our love, unlike the rose,  
 Blooms for ever—ever grows.  
 Whether roses fade or blow,  
 Still together will we go.

Roses bloom and roses fade,  
 Sunshine sometimes, sometimes shade,  
 Happy hours and sorrowing days :  
 Hand in hand we go our ways.  
 Be it weal or be it woe,  
 Still together will we go.

E. S. S.

## HER LONGED-FOR PRESENCE.

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THE tell-tale glass, when I'm performing my morning toilet, informs me most unmistakably that the events I am about to record occurred long before my hair became somewhat scanty and my digestive organs a continual trouble and vexation. In the then Eldorado, Australia, and camping at a now played-out diggings, were four young fellows in the heyday of youth, good spirits, and hope, by name Malcolm Cumming, Tom Short (naturally an elongated individual), Waltham Poynsett, and the writer, a member of the noble army of Smiths—Washington Smith. As may be imagined, we were of varied temperaments, yet, notwithstanding some occasional bickerings, good-humour prevailed; and those acquainted with the extraordinary vicissitudes of a miner's life, where disappointment may follow disappointment month after month, only varied by the faintest glimmering of success, know the value of this quality.

We had been settled at Bullocky Creek for some five months, getting a fair amount of the precious metal, enough to keep us in comfort—at least as much comfort as was to be obtained from Yucatan Crocky's store, where, if one did not come down on the nail, 'he stood a con-si-der-able chance of passing in his cheeks,' so spake Mr. Crocky when any impecunious individual endeavoured to get another pair of boots on the 'tick' system. Unfortunately a drought set in, a great scarcity of water being the result, and not even the Ancient Mariner could have de-

sired water more than we poor miners, who were compelled to cease our operations through our inability to 'pan out.' The weather prophets, who gave vent to their oracular remarks at the saloon bars, were of opinion that the drought must soon break up.

One ex-mate of a merchantman, who, in virtue of his nautical experience, was presumed to be particularly weatherwise, prognosticated that 'in the inside of a week we should have the rains on heavy enough,' as he stood with his back against the bar, making a most exact semicircle round him—I will refrain from mentioning how; suffice it to say that he punctuated his remarks. After a shower of semi-colons, and on the point of commencing a fresh succession of observations garnished with a superfluity of adjectives, he was interrupted by Cumming with the intimation to the effect that we'd heard all that before, and if he couldn't give us some information of a definite character, it would be advisable to dry up.

'You occupy yourself with darning your moleskins, young sparks, and don't come jawing a-nigh me,' replied the ex-mate; and then, addressing the loafers about, 'I say, mates, I say that if we don't have rain enough in three days to make you want some rum to mix with it, I'm ——!' And here he closed most reprehensibly with a verb in the past tense, having, according to his own mind, most emphatically silenced all who presumed to question his opinion.

At this juncture Tom Short,

who combined a certain long-headedness with his unusual length of limb, broke in with,

'Well, you fellows, I'm rather tired of loafing around doing nothing; and, as the captain won't hold out any hopes of a change of weather for three days'—the double-barrelled compliment contained in the foregoing—viz. the step in rank, and the expression of faith in the ex-mate's prognostications—was not lost upon its object, who, in a cordial tone, inquired 'What the little 'un would take?'—'I propose we go out prospecting, and if we are not successful, we shall at any rate be saving our interior organisation from the insinuating effects of Crocky's brandy. What do you say?'

'I, for one, second the motion,' put in Poyntsett; 'and we can have a look at the country, and a hope possesses me that we may come across something more pleasant to the eye than the everlasting scrub and gum-tree; and who knows, we might fall in with an interesting gin who would doubtless be delighted to meet us!'

This was a cut at Cumming, who had a weakness, not very generally diffused at the mines, for preserving his refinement of manner, and had also a regard for his personal appearance.

'Well, I don't know about the gin; possibly she might find in you a more suitable suitor. Considering your mahogany complexion, old man, it wouldn't be a painful contrast to her own. However, it's not a bad idea to make a move; and it's rumoured, I hear, that a damsel of Hibernian extraction has arrived at Younker's Flats, where her family are endeavouring to make a second Eden, unless they are frustrated by a superfluity of pigs.'

The idea of seeing again a female face fresh from home stirred

us at once into a state bordering on excitement, and we returned to our tent bent upon making our preparations for the journey—each, of course, intimating that it was solely for prospecting purposes, but in the event of his coming across the fair damsel, he should be pleased to see her, you know. Miners' moves, as a rule, are conducted with much simplicity. The usual mode is to leave a spade stuck into the claim, and inform your nearest friend of your intention of going on the temporary tramp, and would feel obliged if he would see that no one upsets your rights during your absence. Somehow on this occasion there was a great deal of polishing jack-boots, washing mudstains out of moleskins, darning the same, trimming whiskers, &c.

At length we started, and I think if any of our friends at home had seen us at the outset of that eventful journey, they would have set us down as navvies, with a touch of the buccaneer. Moleskin trousers stuffed into long boots, a flannel shirt of any hue to suit the wearer's fancy, and a broad-brimmed slouching hat may not be considered good form in Piccadilly, or exactly the guise in which to make morning calls on one's fair friends; but in the diggings they are the garments which have been, and still continue to be, the most suitable and most serviceable for all weathers.

Notwithstanding the sun shone as an Australian sun can shine, when in the mind to do so, on our devoted backs, we trudged along what was facetiously called a road in the best of spirits; and the cause of our joyfulness is not difficult to understand. All of us in the old country had been accustomed to the refreshing and refining influence of feminine society, and, with the exception



of Short, who rudely used to say 'Women were made too short for him to stoop down to,' we all had made our *devoir* at the shrine of Terpsichore; and in the halcyon days of youth to be debarred from the society of the softer sex is not one of the least trials of him who follows the meandering path of fortune in distant climes.

A journey through the Australian bush is usually of such a monotonous character, whether it extends over ten or five hundred miles, that the man who extracts subject for lengthy comment on its incidents, or want of incident, must possess a very graphic pen. At length we arrived at the outskirts of Younker's Flats, and signs of hesitation appearing on the faces of his companions, Short suggested a halt—a suggestion which was immediately acted upon, and a conference held on the important subject of who should be deputed to pay our united respects to the fair one, or whether we should approach in force the dwelling which lay before us. After a lengthy debate, it was decided that, in the event of our appearing together, we might possibly be taken for a party of bushrangers bent on 'bailing up' the unfortunate inhabitants of the shanty: it would, therefore, be advisable for a single emissary to be sent; and the selection fell on Cumming, who, by mutual consent, was allowed to be the most presentable member of the fraternity, and the one whose moleskins showed the fewest signs of wear and tear.

Accordingly Malcolm stepped forth on his errand with a jaunty air, leaving us, the less favoured ones, reclining in the shade, and enjoying our tobacco. From where we lay to the squatter's hut was about half an hour's walk, and

so, considering that he might be asked to taste their chops and damper, we turned our attention to a game at poker. Among his other possessions, Short invariably carried a pack of cards, and these were forthwith produced from the inmost recesses of a capacious pocket. A history attached to these cards, the relation of which I trust will not horrify the gentle reader. The ace of spades had a curious cut through the centre, as though made by the point of a dagger; and, indeed, this had been the case, as, during a dispute with reference to the supposed disappearance of the aforesaid ace, an infuriated winner struck his knife through the middle, and as the occurrence happened while a brother digger's hand was over the card, the stains were easily accounted for.

We were all intent upon ascertaining whether the seven of clubs was the seven or something else, when a clod of earth landing in the middle of the impromptu card-table created a diversion, and, I fear, caused a few ejaculations of a somewhat powerful kind. On looking up quickly to see whence the missile came, poor Malcolm stood before us with the most woe-begone look on his face I ever beheld. We eagerly asked him to give an account of his experiences. Perhaps it would be better to give his own words:

'Well, you fellows, when I left, having been selected as the deputation, for reasons which my natural modesty prevents me adverting to, I felt that hope beat high. I didn't feel that sensation long, though. On reaching the hut I ventured to walk in, as there didn't seem to be any one about the place; and I've reason to regret it. No sooner had I entered the door than a broom-handle came down on my head, followed by a

basinful of dirty water ; and, with a screech like an owl with chronic influenza, and in unmistakably Hibernian accents, a most ill-favoured, not to say confoundedly ugly, old hag cried, " An' is it ye wad break into a dacent woman's house in broad daylight, ye brazen-faced spalpeen, ye ill-mannered young deevil, ye thief av a Prodishan, ye — " Fortunately the old girl half choked herself with the torrent of abuse, and I was able to edge in a word or two in explanation of my presence. After a lot of palaver, I managed to smooth her down a bit, and borrowed the end of her apron to rub myself down with. Ugh, you don't catch me on the outlook for fair damosels again — not for a blue month of Sundays ! Phœbus ! I can't get that bilge-water out of my nose. We'd just better break

camp and clear off back, and give up the idea of seeing a feminine face in this benighted region for the future.'

With a painful consciousness of the wisdom of this advice, we slowly retraced our steps. We could hardly attend to our work for some days, and only the lowness of our credit eventually aroused us to renewed activity. The sudden rise of a gold-field in a distant part of the colony separated us for a period, and with increase of fortune my friends were induced to return to the old country, where, at pleasant fire-side gatherings, we often spin our yarns, not, as in the Australian bush, deprived of the elevating influence of the softer sex, but basking in the sunshine of a fair and lovable presence.

G. J. MALCOLM KEARTON.